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Uprising in Palestine—More Than Throwing Stones

LUNDY BANCROFT AND TODD JAILER

"Jaysh! Jaysh! (Soldiers!)" The cries ring out through the streets and alleys of a refugee camp as children, followed by the well-armed Israeli military, rush toward the middle of the camp. It is a dramatic David-and-Goliath moment, played out daily on the West Bank and in Gaza, the territories occupied by Israel since the 1967 war.

The tactics of confrontation are simple. Children provoke the soldiers into following them into the center of town or camp where they are met by young men and women (aged 15 to 30) armed only with stones, the ancient and plentiful product of the rocky soil of Palestine. Behind them are the older men and women, who keep the people in front supplied with "ammunition," and remove the wounded to safety.

The objects of confrontation are the Israeli soldiers, armed to the teeth with submachine guns, assault rifles, rubber bullets, clubs and tear gas (made in the U.S.A.). They are the symbol and the reality of an untenable occupation, to which the Palestinians are saying, "Enough! We're fed up! Get out!"

From the news reports that we see in the United States, it would be easy to think that the Palestinian intifada (uprising) is little more than a series of these confrontations between the Israeli military and Palestinian youths. In fact, the media has made "Palestinian youth" synonymous with "stone throwing, rioting" kids in much the same way as they use "Black youth" as a code word for "violent, criminal, crack-crazed inner city kids." Both racist stereotypes effectively conceal the real meaning of the situation.

While the confrontations between the military and the Palestinians are the most important manifestations of the current struggle for Palestinian self-determination, much more is going on below the surface. In May, as members of the Boston Mobilization for Survival's Middle East Task Force, we travelled through Israel and the occupied territories and met with Israeli

Closing their shops when the Israelis insist that they open, and opening when the Israelis insist that they close, the almost total participation of shopkeepers in this cat and mouse game with the authorities has made shuttered stores and empty markets a proud symbol of Palestinian resistance.
We Thought You Might be Interested...

The 6th North America-Nicaragua Colloquium on Health, an international continuing education conference with accompanying tours, will be held in Managua, Nicaragua from November 3-12, 1988. North Americans' presentations will be integrated into the major annual Nicaraguan scientific health conference. Topics include medicine, nursing, public health, medical technology and related areas. Translation provided. Contact the Committee for Health Rights in Central America, 347 Dolores #210, San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 431-7760.

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"Off Guard": In a question-and-answer format, this pamphlet provides an overall assessment of the role of the United States National Guard in Central America. It highlights an important aspect of United States policy that reaches into local communities across our country. $.50 each; 100/$.25, from AFSC Peace Education, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. (215) 241-7177.

Letter

To the Editor,

Many thanks to RESIST for your coverage of two media-neglected stories, the defense of the Micronesian island of Palau's Anti-nuclear Constitution (June/July 1988) and the effort to close down the isolation unit for women political prisoners in Lexington Kentucky (May). In both cases the Center for Constitutional Rights has brought lawsuits in support of these important causes and your attention to them can only help. Anyone seeking further information about either case can write to the Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway, New York, New York, 10012.

Sincerely,
David Lerner
Center for Constitutional Rights

Corrections

We regret an error which appeared in the article "Mozambique—A Luta Continua," in the June/July issue. In that article Prexy Nesbitt was incorrectly referred to as the president of the National Mozambique Support Network, a U.S. solidarity group. In fact, Nesbitt is a consultant to the Mozambican government.
**“English-Only” Breeding Bigotry in the U.S.**

EDWARD M. CHEN

On July 4, 1986, our nation celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Statue of Liberty, celebrating uniquely American values of individual freedom and societal diversity. Ironically, 1986 also saw the emergence of a political movement which is antithetical to these constitutional guarantees.

It is the “English-only” movement, and it is at bottom anti-immigrant and xenophobic in character. It is fed by the perception that immigration to the United States is “out of control” and that large ethnic communities, particularly Hispanics and Asians, are not willing to assimilate in the traditional “melting pot” process.

The movement attacks virtually all forms of multilingual assistance provided by government and in private commerce to non-English speaking populations on the rationale that our “common bond” of English is being threatened by Hispanics and Asians who are unwilling to learn English. It seeks to “protect” English by enshrining it as the “official language” of the United States.

Development of the English-only Movement

The English-only movement has, within the last five years, gained much national recognition. Organizations such as U.S. English and English First continue to develop support through various national activities and local English-only campaigns. U.S. English, the most prominent of the national organizations, was formed in 1983, “to defend the public interest in the growing debate on bilingualism and biculturalism.” The organization itself claims over 200,000 members, with more than 50,000 in the state of California.

The board of directors of U.S. English includes S.I. Hayakawa, John Tanton, Leo Sorensen, and Stanley Diamond. Its national executive director is Linda Chavez, former aide to President Reagan, who ran an unsuccessful senatorial campaign in 1986 against Barbara Mikulski (D-MD).

U.S. English has been involved in various legislative lobbying activities. These include efforts within Congress to have English declared the official national language, opposing federal legislation on bilingual education and voting rights, and opposing FCC licensing of Spanish language broadcasts. On the state level, it has lobbied for “official language” legislation. U.S. English successfully sponsored Proposition 63 in California which makes English the “official” state language.

While trying to characterize itself, and the rest of the English-only movement, as a grassroots populist movement concerned only with language and national unity, U.S. English is in reality a well-financed political force with strong connections to conservative environmental and anti-immigrant organizations.

John Tanton, the chair of the board of U.S. English, was the founder of the Federation of Americans for Immigration Reform, a key organization promoting the Simpson-Mazzoli bills and other repressive anti-immigration bills. He was also involved in the Environmental Fund, a conservative population control group which ran ads in San Francisco newspapers blaming traffic jams, pollution, increased crime, and higher taxes on illegal immigration.

An Historical Perspective

The current English-only movement is not unprecedented; it bears great similarity to the racist nativism movements which arose in response to the wave of immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe between 1890 and 1914. The Federal Immigration Commission issued a report in 1911 contrasting the “old” and “new” immigrant, arguing that the former had mingled quickly with native-born Americans and became assimilated while “new” immigrants from Italy, Russia, Hungary, and other countries were less intelligent, less willing to learn English or had intentions of not settling permanently in the United States, arguments strikingly similar to those advanced by the current English-only movement.

In response, English literacy requirements were erected as conditions for public employment, naturalization, immigration, and suffrage, in order to exclude those perceived to be of lower classes and “ignorant of our laws and language.” The New York Constitution was amended to disenfranchise over one million Yiddish-speaking citizens by a Republican administration fearful of Jewish votes. The California Constitution was similarly amended to disenfranchise Chinese voters.

World War I gave rise to intense anti-German sentiment. A number of states enacted extreme English-only laws. For instance, Nebraska and Ohio passed laws in 1919 and 1923 prohibiting the teaching of any languages other than English until the student passed the eighth grade. The Supreme Court ultimately held the Nebraska statute unconstitutional as violative of due process in *Meyer v. Nebraska*.

**Nativism revisited**

It is not surprising that the current English-only movement comes at a time of rising resentment toward immigration from Mexico, Central America, and Asia. It appeals to our worst fears of a changing demography, exploiting and perpetuating false stereotypes about Asians and Latinos.

English-only proponents argue that our “common bond” of English is being threatened by “language rivalries” and “ethnic separatism” and that today’s immigrants are refusing to learn English. They contend that bilingual services and programs provide a disincentive to learn English and permit immigrants to live in “language ghettos” without assimilating into our society.

In fact, immigrants want to learn English. A recent study conducted by the California Population Center concluded that immigrants who learn English are more likely to achieve a high level of education and to become citizens.

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English-Only

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an independent marketing firm showed that 98% of Latino parents surveyed, as compared to 94% of Anglo and Black parents, felt it was essential for their children to read and write English perfectly. Latinos, Asians, and other new immigrants regularly fill the long waiting lists for adult English classes, which in Los Angeles County alone exceed 40,000. In New York, over 25,000 are on waiting lists.

The claim of the English-only advocates that bilingual services threaten the unity of our nation is not only based on false premises, but ignores history and experience.

Bilingualism in government is not new in America. At the birth of our nation, the Continental Congress printed a number of documents, including the Articles of Confederation, in German for the benefit of non-English speaking patriots.

Government and education were conducted in German and English in the mid-West during the 1800’s. The experience of New Mexico, a state which officially has been bilingual since 1912, demonstrates that political divisiveness need not result from cultural pluralism. New Mexico, which has long had bilingual ballots, enjoys the highest rate of Hispanic political participation in the country.

What English-only proponents fail to realize is that the real common bond of all Americans is our shared belief and commitment to democracy, freedom, and equality of opportunity. Many of today’s immigrants from Latin America and Southeast Asia, just as the Germans, Italians, and Jews that preceded them, fled from political repression, war, and abject poverty. They all share a common heritage—the quest for freedom and opportunity. That common heritage is America’s common bond, and it runs much deeper than the English language.

The English-only agenda

The English-only movement appears to have four principal goals:

(1) To ratify a constitutional amendment which would declare English the official language of the United States and outlaw bilingual programs and services provided by federal, state, and local governments;

(2) To convince Congress to repeal bilingual ballot requirements under the Voting Rights Act; and

(3) To sharply reduce federal requirements for bilingual education.

(4) To pass English-only legislation in as many of the states as possible.

In implementing their goals, the first major step was obtaining passage of Proposition 63 in California. Spending over $400,000 to collect signatures, the local arm of U.S. English succeeded in getting the measure on the statewide ballot. It passed by a 73% to 27% margin.

Proposition 63 makes English the official state language and provides for enforcement by private lawsuits. Its effect remains unclear. Little concrete action has ensued since its passage. Its proponents have not yet introduced the draconian legislation (e.g. terminating bilingual drivers license tests, welfare applications, social services, etc.) once promised. Nor have they sued localities, such as San Francisco, which continue to provide multi-lingual voting assistance. The reason for this relative quiet, however, is not that Proposition 63 is necessarily innocuous. Rather, the English-only proponents have decided to escalate their campaign in other states and in Congress; obviously were the “parades of horribles” to materialize in California, these efforts would be severely prejudiced.

Indeed, within a year after passage of Proposition 63, English-only legislation was introduced in more than 35 other states with mixed success. Laws were passed in states where there was nominal resistance, but were defeated in hotly contested legislative battles in New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and others. Currently 13 states have official English-only laws. (These are Arkansas, California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.) Legislative efforts will be renewed by English-only advocates in the other states. It appears that English-only proponents will succeed in getting voter initiatives on the ballots for the November, 1988 election in Arizona, Florida, and Colorado.

So far the state laws have not had dramatic implications, primarily because when an attempt has been made to terminate programs (such as giving driver’s license tests in Spanish) it has been successfully challenged in court. The same cannot be said for local ordinances. For example, a Dade County, Florida law prohibits the county from spending public funds on services in a foreign language. As a result certain hospital programs have

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been cancelled and signs posted within hospitals are no longer in both Spanish and English. Going to ridiculous lengths, the county has even stopped including the Latin names of animal species on its zoo signs.

Since 1981, English-only proponents have regularly introduced the English Language Amendment ("ELA") to the U.S. Constitution in Congress. The ELA would make English the official national language and some versions would explicitly prohibit state and federal governments from requiring any services be provided in a language other than English, except for the limited use of enabling non-English speaking students to become proficient in English.

The Response In Opposition to English-only

Californians United, a coalition which opposed Proposition 63, continues to exist in order to monitor English-only developments within the state and to facilitate educational efforts in other states facing the issue. It sponsored a successful conference in April, 1988 at Stanford, California, bringing together 200 participants from around the nation and from various disciplines (e.g. attorneys, public officials, educators, linguists, community organizers) to exchange information and strengthen a nationwide network of opponents to English-only.

In Arizona, opponents are attempting to counter the English-only initiative with their own initiative which affirms the importance of English and urges the legislature to improve English proficiency and literacy, but not by discriminating against non-English speakers. However, the measure may not get on the ballot as it is being held up in the State Senate. In Florida, English-only opponents have come together to form "English Plus, Inc." to oppose the Florida initiative. Two coalitions, "Colorado Unity" and "Coloradans for Language Freedom," have formed in Colorado to oppose the initiative there.

On the national level, a large number of organizations interested in language policy and civil rights have come together to form the English Plus Information Clearinghouse ("EPIC") based in Washington, D.C. EPIC, formally a project of the Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Forum, is a clearinghouse of information relating to the English-only movement and language policy. It publishes an informative quarterly newsletter which describes recent legislative developments in various states and in Congress, legal cases, etc. It is not, however, an advocacy organization nor has it been involved in grass roots organizing.

The ELA has spurred opponents to organize a national campaign to oppose the ELA and similar legislation in the states. The campaign will be run by a coalition of the organizations which have been active on the issue (such as MALDEF, National Education Association, ACLU, members of EPIC) and will include a massive petition and letter writing campaign directed at members of the Subcommittee considering the ELA. The campaign is also seen as a basis to establish a longer term public educational effort through a permanent organization to counter the English-only movement.

The implications

In one sense, it's hard to take the English-only movement seriously. The idea of zealous, "citizen-guardians" of the English language punishing those who fail to conform due to their inability to speak English is hard to imagine. But, by legally sanctioning the punishment of those who fail to conform because of their limited English-speaking ability, initiatives like the ELA and the English-only movement breed intolerance and bigotry. The movement is contrary to our constitutional tradition which affords protection of individual differences and societal diversity; the English-only movement, in contrast, seeks to enshrine as a constitutional principal cultural and linguistic conformity by eliminating rather than protecting the rights of minority groups.

The stereotype of disloyal, anti-assimilationists now advanced by English-only advocates is not only baseless but disturbingly reminiscent of the same branding of disloyalty placed on Japanese-Americans to justify their internment in relocation camps during World War II. Today's English-only movement is cut from the same cloth. It is essential that the mean-spirited and ill-conceived English-only movement is stopped before it spreads.

Edward M. Chen is staff counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. For more information about groups working against English-only initiatives, contact the ACLU, 1663 Mission St., Suite 460, San Francisco, CA 94103; EPIC, 227 Mass. Ave., N.E., Suite 120, Washington, D.C. 20002; or MALDEF, contact Martha Jimenez, 1430 K St., N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C., 20005

Teacher Maria Araica drills Spanish-speaking 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders in reading skills at the two-way bilingual Hernandez Elementary School in Boston. Photo: John May.
and Palestinian activists in order to gain a more complete understanding of the uprising. We found that a comprehensive network of neighborhood and sectoral organizations is being formed to enable the Palestinians to continue to resist the growing brutality of the occupation, and to sever ties with the Israeli state.

**Community-based Committees**

Sectoral organizations have existed for years in the occupied territories, representing such interests as labor, teachers, students and women. But local grass-roots organizing has taken off since the intifada, tremendously increasing the number of Palestinians actively participating in community organizations and supporting the resistance to the occupation.

As elsewhere, students are a driving force in community organizing among Palestinians. We learned some of the background to organizing efforts in the territories from a group of students from Bir Zeit University (closed many months now), active in the resistance, whose excitement and hopefulness was inspiring. These students, and other Palestinians we spoke with, told us that before the uprising, organizing was slow, with inadequate grassroots participation, and with a large amount of energy wasted on factional struggles.

Organizing in the West Bank had been somewhat more successful than in the Gaza Strip because historically Israeli repression had been more brutal in Gaza. But since last December there has been a surge from below, forcing Palestinian organizations to unify and democratize, and spawning a wide range of local groups, drawing on people's particular interests and skills.

Medical committees, for instance, are being established in the cities and camps to serve a number of functions. People are being trained in the provision of first aid to deal with the casualties of the demonstrations. Clinics are being set up in people's houses as an alternative to going to hospitals. This is important because listings of admittances to the hospitals are used by the Israeli authorities to identify people for later arrest—the logic being that if you hadn't been participating in a demonstration, you wouldn't have been wounded.

The medical committees are also taking surveys of the medical needs of the people in their communities so that necessary drugs and equipment can be stocked in case of emergency. They are also blood-typing people so that if blood is needed people can be contacted efficiently. Previously, large numbers of people wishing to give blood would descend on a hospital after a demonstration, sometimes leading to yet another confrontation with the military.

Education committees have been set up to provide instruction for children whose schools have been closed from the beginning of the uprising in December. (Although reopened in June, schools continue to be suspended or shut down as the intifada shows no sign of diminishing.) Classes are held in people's houses, and the older children help teach the young. This education in informal settings has long been a reality for students in West Bank colleges like Beir Zeit, constantly closed by the military as hotbeds of Palestinian nationalism. Although seemingly innocuous, when these home schools are discovered by the Israelis, their organizers and teachers are invariably arrested; a secret school in Ramallah, we learned, had been discovered and closed just a few days before we arrived.

Agricultural committees have been formed to provide seed, farming implements, and expertise to people cultivating vegetables for the first time. By farming plots of land individually and collectively, Palestinians are reaffirming their connection to the land and increasing their self-reliance while decreasing their dependency on food grown inside the state of Israel. The West Bank and Gaza make up Israel's second largest export market (the United States is the largest), and this step toward self-sufficiency in food is also a strike against the Israeli economy.

That this part of the struggle is seen as a threat by the Israelis is testified to by the administrative detention of a Beir Zeit University professor who spearheaded much of this agricultural movement. Palestinians in the territories are prohibited from planting crops without a permit, even on their own land, and the military authorities periodically invoke this law to uproot Palestinian crops. A Palestinian journalist from Bethlehem explained that the denial of permits to plant is part of the land expropriation strategy; if the land lies fallow for a period, Israeli law allows it to be expropriated for use by Israeli settlements or by the military, with the excuse that the Palestinians weren't using it. Land committees, which try to defend against land expropriation, are closely related to the agricultural committees. (See box)

Food committees have also been organized to ensure that people have enough to eat. Because of the dif

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**Gardening: The Latest Threat to Israeli Security**

*This item appeared in a recent update from the Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights, a group RESIST has supported.*

June 4, 1988. "Two weeks ago, and on four separate occasions, three of us... were summoned... and individually questioned about our agricultural business in Beit Sahour. On all these occasions we repeatedly stated that we are a close group of professionals who have two things in common; old friendship and love of gardening. Our decision to start an agricultural business in Beit Sahour stems from a simple desire to supply agricultural materials and provide agricultural services to the community...." The item goes on to describe the arrest and detention of one of the three, and the questioning of the others. "They were accused of being members of a popular committee and told that their agricultural activities were 'political' and dangerous, both to the people and the security of the area. We deny these allegations completely...."

The three were informed that the business must be suspended immediately or all sorts of harassment would be continued. When they failed to close the business, each was summoned to military headquarters and made to wait "a minute" for questioning. When the minute didn't come, they went home. This was repeated over three days. "It now seems that this harassment will continue. This became obvious, in fact, when soldiers suddenly created a checkpoint right in front of Dr. J's house; military vehicles make deliberately noisy u-turns in the middle of the night in this one-way street. When this does not awaken the house's inhabitants the soldiers direct strong spotlights into the bedrooms to ensure their awakening. Needless to say, the events of the past three days have been terrifying for our families and children."

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ficulties in purchasing food when stores are closed by the strikes of mer­chants, and because so many wage­earners have been imprisoned (over 17,000 Palestinians have been arrested since the beginning of the uprising), this sharing of resources among people has become a necessity of survival as well as a way of building solidarity among members of a community.

The merchants’ committees are playing a central role in the resistance for perhaps the first time in recent memory. Closing their shops when the Israelis insist that they open, and opening when the Israelis insist that they close, the almost total participation of shopkeepers in this cat and mouse game with the authorities has made shuttered stores and empty markets a proud symbol of Palestinian resistance. Some storeowners continue to supply the needs of the community by selling or bartering goods with their neighbors out of their houses. An important effect of this is to circumvent paying the VAT (sales tax) to the Israeli government. If a store is closed, how can it be selling goods?

The occupation is becoming much more expensive for the Israeli government, because of both the cost of military repression and the tax resistance by Palesti­nians. Before the uprising, the occupation paid for itself—in fact, it turned a profit—through taxes collected from Palestinians.

Guard committees have been created to protect against attacks by militant Jewish settlers. It is common for settlers to drive into Arab villages, usually at night, breaking windows of cars and houses and shooting at Palestinians, sometimes wounding or killing them. Israeli authorities rarely take action against the perpetrators of these attacks, which have increased in response to the intifada. Guard committees set up a rotating watch and, when they see settlers approaching, warn the people, who pour out of their houses, building barricades in the streets and arming themselves with stones.

Regional Leadership Emerging

As these local committees grow in numbers and effectiveness, they are beginning to communicate and cooperate with similar organizations in other neighborhoods and in nearby villages and camps. These alliances are in turn leading to the emergence of a regional leadership. This is a new and exciting process for Palestinians, accustomed in recent years to top-down organizing, where leaders of labor unions or women’s unions, for example, tried to build local committees to serve the political interests of the leadership. Now, leadership skills are shared widely, even at high levels. A recent and important illustration of the change is that, although the Israelis announced the capture of the Gazan leadership of the intifada in April (and the Palestinians confirm this), the uprising in Gaza has not diminished and a new leadership has emerged.

Local organizing is made more difficult by the Israelis’ opposition to any independent Palestinian social structures. Prior to the intifada, members of local groups were generally not arrested unless they were believed to be leaders. Now, however, any Palestinian known to be participating in any group not tied to the Israeli administration is likely to be arrested. For exam-

ple, a Palestinian in Ramallah was arrested for belonging to a sports club.

A high degree of secrecy and trust is required in the organizing process, because Israel has built a system of collaborators in the territories, particularly in Gaza. Palestinians are offered large bribes by Israeli Shin Bet agents, which are balanced off against threats of torture or imprisonment of family members for refusal to cooperate. It is very difficult for Palestinians to take any action against collaborators because of Israel’s use of capital punishment and other forms of retribution; two collaborators were killed in Jalazone camp on the West Bank, and the camp was placed on 23-hour a day curfew for over thirty days. Jalazone was still under curfew while we were in the area and we heard that the residents were battling starva-

tion.

The use of torture against Palesti­nians arrested on suspicion of political crimes (such as membership in a local committee) has become routine; few, if any, of those arrested escape it. Methods documented by such groups as Al Haq, a West Bank human rights organization, and Amnesty Interna­tional, include severe and repeated beatings, extreme exposure to the elements, sleep deprivation, denial of access to sanitary facilities, sexual humiliation, and threats to family members, among others. We talked at length with a young man in Gaza who had recently been released from the Ansar 2 prison there, whose detailed account of his torture, and the torture of fellow prisoners, confirmed what we had read and heard from other sources. *

The Israelis also use a system of harassing activities that fall short of torture, but are designed to erode the will of Palestinian resistance, such as frequent short imprisonments of the same individual, road blocks where people are kept waiting for hours, denial of family members’ visits to prisoners, and so forth. The Israeli military has coined the word “terter” to describe these almost-torture activities.

Economic Resistance

Some sectors of the Israeli economy are hard hit by the uprising. The tourist industry, for example, is down 65%. Industries dependent on exports to the territories are being hurt by the Palestinian boycotts, at a time when Israeli industry is already in crisis, for other economic reasons, and is particularly vulnerable.

The occupation is becoming much more expensive for the Israeli government, because of both the cost of military repression and the tax resistance by Palestinians. Before the uprising, the occupation paid for itself—in fact, it turned a profit—through taxes collected from Palestinians.

The refusal to pay taxes includes income taxes, licensing and permit fees.
and the VAT. Nonpayment of these fees can have serious consequences including imprisonment or confiscation of property or identity cards. Because Palestinians are forced to carry identity cards, and must show them at the innumerable military roadblocks and when stopped on the streets by any soldier (or for that matter, any Israeli) who has the urge to harass, losing your papers is the equivalent of being put under town arrest. Resisters also refuse to pay for water and electricity. Israeli authorities have shut off water and electricity to some smaller Arab villages in retaliation, but villages are generally less dependent on electricity than city dwellers and often have access to wells for drinking water.

The Palestinians we talked to placed their hopes mostly in two areas: 1) that U.S. public opinion critical of the occupation will be stimulated by the intifada, particularly by its largely non-violent nature (so far one Israeli has been killed by a Palestinian in the course of the uprising); and 2) that Israel will find the economic effects of the intifada too great to bear. They count on these two factors to force Israel to negotiate with the PLO for the creation of an independent Palestinian state. This was the political common denominator of all the Palestinians we spoke with: recognition of the PLO as their political leadership, and a Palestinian state in the territories.

A recent poll, reported in the Boston Globe showed that a narrow majority of Americans favor the creation of a Palestinian state, yet efforts to mobilize that opinion and speak out against Israeli policies meet with tremendous hostility and intimidation, even within the U.S. left. The Palestinians depend upon us to break our silence.

Palestinians place little faith in the ability and resolve of the Israeli left to end the occupation; indeed, protest against the occupation, considering the scale of the uprising, has been minimal. Among the more effective groups are Yesh Gvul (There is a Limit/Border) which represents about 600 Israelis who have refused to do their military service in the occupied territories.* Stop the Occupation, Down With the Occupation, and the military consistently kills 5-7 Palestinians every week (the death toll was over 200 in early July) and is resorting to lethal force more quickly than a few months ago. Apparently, a fast bullet to the head is more acceptable than the massive and unpopular "beatings policy" of the spring, probably because it is more difficult to capture on film.

The Palestinian resistance that has crystallized in the nonviolent organizing of the intifada is inspiring, but the well of patience from which it draws is not bottomless. As one Palestinian said when bidding us farewell, "You must keep our people from becoming desperate. We say the intifada should continue nonviolently. But if we just get killed, jailed, have our bones broken, then we must change our tactics. You must keep our people from becoming desperate."

Todd Jailer is an editor at South End Press in Boston. Lundy Bancroft is a counselor at Emerge. Both are active members of the Boston Mobilization for Survival's Middle East Task Force.

*For more information on the activities of this group, contact Friends of Yesh Gvul, 1678 Shattuck Ave., P.O. Box 6, Berkeley, CA 94709. (415) 848-9391.
Informe Colombiano, Box 1017, Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156.

Though Colombia has one of the worst records for human rights abuses anywhere—official use of murder, "disappearance," torture, illegal raids, indiscriminate arrest, and the militarization of cities are all widespread—there is little information available in English to document and challenge these actions. Informe Colombiano was founded in 1982 as an English-language clearinghouse on Colombia. Latino activists in New York, in collaboration with contacts in Colombia, publish a monthly newsletter monitoring conditions in Colombia. The group also speaks in schools, produces materials in English for the United Nations' Human Rights Commission, and works in coalition with groups addressing human rights issues in Central America, the Middle East and South Africa.

A recent issue of the newsletter revealed that there have been 5,536 political murders in Colombia in seven years, 915 disappearances in 10 years and 2,200 cases of torture since 1981. Those murdered include Hector Abad Gomez, president of the Committee for Human Rights in the city of Medellin, and priests, journalists, artists, trade union and Indian leaders, and students. Death squads have placed hundreds of individuals on death lists, including leading Colombian artists. Informe Colombiano is providing an invaluable service in disseminating this information. RESIST's grant went to increase the circulation of the newsletter.

Working Classroom began in 1978 with four educators who had been searching for ways to combine teaching, research and political work. Individually and collectively members have worked on writing projects in prisons, community schools, and vocational programs. The goal of the group is to provide technical assistance to community-based literacy programs; to encourage oppressed communities to develop their own literatures in their own languages, and to create a means for artistic and political collaboration across age, class and ethnic barriers, challenging the ways standard English is used to deprive people of the right to learn.

The Books for Bluefields project was organized to protest the destructive role of the U.S. in Nicaragua, the denigration of the Spanish language in New Mexican schools, and the marginalization of undocumented workers and their families in Albuquerque. Participants in the project attend weekly workshops coordinated by a writer and an artist. During the workshops, students discuss themes and solve writing and design problems. In addition to sending the books to children in Nicaragua, the students sell the books at cultural events, investing the proceeds in a scholarship fund for all the writers.

RESIST's grant went towards a coordinator's stipend while seeking larger grants.

Philippine Workers Support Committee, 2252 Puna St., Honolulu, HI 96828.

The Philippine Workers Support Committee (PWSC), founded in 1983 in Hawaii, now has chapters in six U.S. cities. The network has sponsored tours sending more than 45 U.S. and Canadian unionists to the Philippines, and raising more than $10,000 to aid Philippine labor groups in gaining basic trade union rights. PWSC stresses the importance of worker-to-worker solidarity based on the belief that U.S. and Philippine workers face common opponents in the U.S. government and multinational corporations.

Besides organizing educational tours (both sending U.S. workers to the Philippines and bringing Filipino workers here) PWSC holds educational forums to encourage recognition and support for the KMU (Kilusang Mayo Uno, the Philippine's leading democratic trade union network); campaigns for the release of jailed unionists and protests repression against union activists, and publishes the Philippine Labor Alert.

RESIST's recent grant went to expand circulation of the newsletter, which provides the most complete summary of Philippine labor news available in North America.

Speaking of which, RESIST readers might be interested in supporting a BOOK DRIVE FOR GABRIELA which we learned about in the Philippine Labor Alert:

GABRIELA, the leading women's organization in the Philippines, is trying to obtain the following types of books and periodicals:

- children's books—reading primers for children ages 4 to 18, especially picture books;
- self-help and how-to books on crafts, garment design, furniture, business, merchandising, food production, cottage industries, computers, word-processors, media, etc.;
- alternate technology in agriculture, recycling, waste treatment, reforestation, gasahol production, solar, wind and water power, paper-making, tofu and other food production;
- literature and art books—feminist classics, dramas, music, painting, photography, video;
- health, nutrition, preventive medicine, herbs, childcare, etc.

Please mail books, magazines, or money to PHILCIR, 1472 Broadway, Rm. 813, New York, NY 10036. Checks can be made out to PHILCIR, Book Campaign. All books and money will go towards GABRIELA's library.
Abortion Rights Fund of Western Mass, Box 732, Hadley, MA 01035.

The Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts formed in 1987 in response to immediate threats to reproductive rights, and to develop a coherent organization to defend and expand those rights. The four counties in the region include wide areas of both urban and rural poverty, and the population is diverse in community attitudes and beliefs. For example, the region includes Amherst, which voted 5 - 1 against the 1986 Massachusetts anti-abortion amendment (see Resist #188, Sept, 1986), and Chicopee where the amendment carried by a 3 - 1 margin.

The core members of the new group all worked to defeat the amendment, which, if passed, would have eliminated state Medicaid funding for abortions. While the amendment failed, the opposition got 40% of the vote. The group anticipates another referendum attempt that would specifically target Medicaid funding. Meanwhile, though Massachusetts continues to fund Medicaid abortions, many women, especially teenagers, are denied access to abortion because of inability to pay.

The Abortion Rights Fund makes interest free loans available to low-income women seeking abortions, and provides free pregnancy testing. The group’s political/educational agenda includes advocating for the expansion of Medicaid funding and abortion services; outreach campaigns to inform women of the existence of support services; and educating young women about their rights and choices.

The group is committed to creating a broad reproductive rights coalition in Western Mass. that will include women of color, working class and poor women, lesbian and gay male activists, disability rights activists and activists for the rights and concerns of older women. RESIST’s grant went towards the production of a Spanish/English outreach brochure to publicize the activities of the Fund and to educate the public further about barriers to reproductive choice.

The Resist Pledge System

The most important source of Resist’s income is monthly pledges. Pledges help us plan ahead by guaranteeing us a minimum monthly income. In turn, pledges receive a monthly reminder letter (in addition to the newsletter) which contains news of recent grants and other Resist activities. So take the plunge and become a Resist pledge!

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