

SOLIDARITY

عروض

SCREENINGS

التضامن

GLASGOW

غلاسكو



ALTERNATIVE & REVOLUTIONARY
CINEMA FROM THE ARAB WORLD

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

6-9 PM AT THE LISTEN GALLERY G4 OVP

Issue 2 - June 2024

 SOLIDARITY SCREENINGS GLASGOW

Solidarity Screenings Glasgow's Political Line

Imperialism is the primary contradiction, it is our principal enemy, and as such our politics stems from our anti-imperialism. Solidarity Screenings is our attempt to contribute to the building of dual power in the front of culture, (re)building solidarity among oppressed nations, and shedding light on the periphery and semi-periphery through art and culture. By this, we hope to contribute to the growing revolutionary and anti-imperialist movement in Glasgow.

Why the region

Historically, the oppressed world and socialist nations had close ties, be that fair and equal economic relations such as with Nasser's Egypt, to invaluable support to our resistances, such as arming the PFLP. This unity most highly expressed itself with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The USSR's slide into social-imperialism and capitalists poisoning China, led the former Soviet bloc to be ravaged by and aligned to U.S. imperialism and China to be an imperialist power. We must swim against the tide of reaction and rebuild the ties between our peoples!

U.S. imperialism is the main enemy of the peoples of the world. But, as Russian and Chinese imperialism grows, the Amerikan imperialists are becoming more ruthless and brutal. We must not fall into campism, siding with Russian or Chinese imperialism because of NATO expansion. This is changing one oppressor for another. Rather, we side with the oppressed peoples of the world in the periphery and semi-periphery. The colonised and semi-colonised nations are caught in the crossfire of the imperialists. The working class and peasantry everywhere are the agents of revolutionary change.

The Arab nation has become one of the centres of the international struggle against imperialism. Our highest expressions of resistance being the Palestinian and Yemeni resistance organisations. The whole region is aflamed in its struggle against our occupiers. For us living in the imperial core, we must augment their struggle in any way we can. So we hope to contribute to the front of culture. Art is a battlefield! We must destroy the old bourgeois-imperialist culture that has a stranglehold on all of us.

We must build up the new proletarian, anti-imperialist culture.

Our goal

Contradictions are heightening, Imperialism (particularly the U.S, already characterised by its brutality) will take a more ruthless form internationally and a more openly fascist form at home. We must be ready. We hope our screenings will inspire people to read more on revolutionary history and to then implement what we learn. As Amilcar Cabral said “There may have been revolutions which have had a revolutionary theory and which have failed. But there has certainly been no revolution which has succeeded without a revolutionary theory.”

Contents

The Cinema and the Revolution by PFLP - 3

Manifesto of the Palestinian Cinema Group - 6

The Rupture Cinema Project - 8

Report on Police Feppression of Anti-Imperialist Blockade - 14



If you would like to get involved in this project, we are always looking for volunteers! Be it co-running a screening, preparing food, to writing for the booklet. Email us on solidarityscreeningsglasgow@gmail.com

We aim for a broad yet principled anti-imperialist movement in the arts.



السيف الفلسطيني
سجل الماضي، وحبوية الحاضر
وإشراق المستقبل



The Cinema and the Revolution
by The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
(date unknown)

Although monopolistic companies have dominated the art of the cinema in its production and distribution and imposed their capitalist thinking on the contents of the films produced, nevertheless avant-garde artists have striven to harness this medium to the working class, its thought and its future. The attempts made by world Zionism since 1897 to exploit cinema film, and its ability to influence the widest masses, can no longer continue its domination because of the defeats imperialism has received at the hands of the struggling peoples of the world.

With the Palestinian Resistance movement, techniques of film-making grew which recorded the reality of the revolution. However, in their early days they did not go beyond recording some documentation without moving on to a wider scope in vision and obscurity. Perhaps the initiative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine from 1970 onwards played a major part in this field, when it began producing documentary films, in view of the ability of such films to express the revolution and its thinking, and to be a basis linked to reality in material form. This activity occurred on several levels:

1. Permanent showings in Fidayeen bases and Palestinian camps;
2. Film shows in cultural organizations and clubs and working-class areas;
3. Directing attention towards film festivals so that relations were consolidated, through this frequent participation, between the Palestinian cinema and the progressive international cinema on the one hand, and the Palestinian Resistance, particularly the Popular Front, was able to show the true facts of the Palestinian struggle and the implications of the Palestinian cause on the other. It thereby exposed the essence of Zionist falsification and portrayed the closest picture to the truth about the Palestinian cause, raising the voice of the Palestinian cause for the first time through the Leipzig festival in 1971. From this the Palestinian cinema moved onwards to many

festivals, in which the relationship between the Palestinian revolutionary cinema and the world cinema was strengthened, so that it became united within one line of exposing the fascist methods of colonialists and invaders, and portraying peoples' continuous struggles and victories;

4. Distribution of Palestinian films to political parties, and students' and workers' organizations throughout the world. The role of these films was very important, both in embodying the revolution's thinking, strategy and continuing struggle, and in refuting Zionism's allegations and its fascist exploiter's way of thought.

5. Preserving the film and photographic documentation of the Palestinian revolution in a special archive, as source material not only for Palestinian film-makers but also for friends wishing to share in the revolution through Palestinian films.

6. Training the fighters to take motion pictures and creating cadres able to use the camera side by side with the rifle in the battle for liberation.

In addition to this cinematographic work, the activity included another side in the field of cinema culture by creating human consciousness, so as to bring the value of revolutionary cinema and the role of film into the march of the revolution, and to draw from experiences of the cinema throughout the world in order to clarify its role in fighting imperialism, monopoly and the values of capitalist thinking, by means of the art of film-making.

This came about through the cultural pages of *Al Hadaf*, the central magazine which speaks for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as well as through courses and lectures organized by the Front's artistic committee.

Being aware of the importance of this vehicle of culture, the Popular Front for the Liberation endeavours to develop this aspect through continuous production and showings, as well as through consolidating ties with all film-makers in the world who are striving to expose all

types of domination and exploitation, in order to break the stranglehold of monopoly applied by the world's capitalist companies.

Palestinian cinema has played an active and effective part during its short lifetime and within the limitations of its activity. After the cinema film was absent for a long time from participation in the course of events, Palestinian films have come to constitute a new and growing phenomenon within the wider phenomenon of armed Palestinian resistance, linked to it and expressing it in one way or another. Although the sum total of Palestinian cinematographic activity has remained confined to initiatives and below the suitable standards of planning and programming, it has taken a long leap forward. There is no doubt that the criterion for the development of Palestinian cinema lies in the maturing of political and cultural awareness of the importance of the cinema, so that the conception of a Leninist evaluation of the cinema may be a profound, definitive and firm one, not merely one of wonder and excitement at the potential importance the teacher of the proletariat saw in the cinema in bringing about awakening and resurgence (of all the arts, the cinema is considered the most important).

We shall work with all our efforts and abilities to give these words direction, so that the fighting cinema of Palestine may move forward to the front ranks in the movement of world cinema.



Manifesto of the Palestinian Cinema Group (1972)

For too long, Arab cinema has been drowning in subjects that do not engage with reality or deal with it in a superficial fashion. Over time, this has created habits within Arab viewers that have constrained their consciousness, and, as a consequence, distanced them from the pressing issues they face from the imperialist Zionist enemy and the Arab reactionary.

Throughout Arab film history, serious, ambitious attempts to express reality have emerged, but rapidly disappeared under the yoke of the cinematic monopoly, which has consciously and vigilantly laboured to prevent the establishment of a purposeful Arab cinema. Nevertheless, the evolving political events have necessitated a new cinema, although its level of ambition has not matched that of the events themselves. Most efforts were reformist in content and burdened by the legacy of traditional film form. Notwithstanding, the depth of the wound exacted by June 1967 brought to the fore young talents with confidence in the masses, who spurred them to making films bearing the characteristics and advantages of alternative cinema in both form and content. These films discussed the defeat, reflected the steadfast position of our people, and spoke boldly about the Palestinian cause and the armed resistance waged by the Palestinian Arab people.

Hence the importance of Palestinian cinema and the necessity to develop it so that it can competently stand with the courageous fighters, reflect the truth of the cause, depict the stages of the Palestinian Arab people's struggle to liberate their land, reflect the past and present, and look ahead to the future. Such a cinema should grow out of organized collective efforts because individual initiatives, no matter how great, remain limited. Therefore, we who are interested in cinema, literature and the intellect, the authors of this manifesto, have found it important to assemble an organization called the Palestinian Cinema Group, which operates according to the following principles:

1. The main objective of this group is to produce Palestinian film committed to the cause and goals of the Palestinian revolution, stemming from the Arab context and with progressive, democratic content.
2. To work towards alternative cinematic form that functions dialectically with content.
3. The Group dedicate their expertise and output to the service of the Palestinian revolution and the cause of the Palestinian Arab people.
4. The Group consider themselves one of the institutions of the Palestinian and Arab revolution in whose goals they hold, given that their funding derives from agreements struck with Palestinian or Arab entities. They invite the Palestinian National Fund or its delegates to audit their finances once they start work.
5. The Group are headquartered in the PLO Research Center in Beirut.
6. The Group have formulated a plan of action and internal regulation to govern their internal and external relations.
7. The practical objectives they seek to achieve are:
With regard to production: to make revolutionary films that will mobilize the masses for the revolution and acquaint the world with the struggle of our people and our cause.

Documentation: to create a film library – an archive – bringing together moving and still images which depict the struggle of our people and the stages of development of its cause.

Cooperation: to strengthen relationships with revolutionary and progressive film groups around the world, to represent Palestine in film festivals, and to provide available film facilities to all allies working in the interests of the Palestinian revolution.

Translation by Samiha Khalil and Kay Dickinson.

The Rupture Cinema Project

This is a heavily abridged version of rupture cinema's manifesto. Rupture cinema is a project in Dublin aiming to reclaim derelict space for film screenings.

Beginnings

The Rupture Cinema project began in response to the rotting site of a vacant building on Dublin's South Circular Road. A towering white elephant, the building upon further investigation revealed itself to be an old cinema, that is, Rialto Cinema. A part of the building's crumbling visage which once would have had the billings of the day's screenings and their show times now has become boarded up and in its place there is an advertisement from BNP Paribas — the largest bank in Europe — announcing the property as 'for sale'. Splayed over this advertisement is a garish red and white sticker declaring that the property has, in fact, been 'SOLD'. Bought by Cork based enterprise Mologa Capital Ltd — acting on behalf of Dider de Witte, a Belgian property tycoon and tax fraudster — the property is now in the planning stages of being turned into a 317 bed student accommodation. With the average price for a room in private student accommodation in Dublin falling at €940 per month in a period that represents the most intense housing crisis in the country's history, it is no wonder local residents and the public at large feel aggrieved by such plans. Indeed, the case of Rialto Cinema is a microcosm of a much larger issue at the core of Dublin's urban and political terrain: that of the destruction of cultural, artistic venues and public space in favour of overpriced student accommodation, hotels and private enterprise which favour profit over culture and community. Within this austere context Rupture was born, a project which aims to use cinema as a combative tool to fight back against enclosure and to reanimate the bonds of community in Dublin city centre. Such a project stands as one small part of a cinematic and social struggle which has been playing out since the invention of the medium itself.

New Technologies, New Hopes

The hopes attached to the burgeoning cinema experience are best put by Jacques Ranciere when he said that cinema was "the popular art of the 20th century, which allowed the greatest number of people to be thrilled

by the splendour of a ray of light on an ordinary setting.” It is for this reason — the ‘mass’ appeal and the ability for a projector to seize an ordinary space and change it into a cauldron of collective experience — that cinema was seized upon by both production companies — seeing its potential mass profit — and also by revolutionaries like Vladimir Lenin, who is purported to have said to the Soviet minister of Education A. V. Lunacharsky in 1922 ‘for us of all the arts cinema is the most important.’

Mediating Distance

When one makes the concerted effort to go to the cinema, this is seen as an active thing, but when a person enters the cinema, their actions from then on are perceived as passive somehow. What this serves to say is not so much that cinema viewing is ‘active’ in the traditional sense, but that the terms ‘active’ and ‘passive’ are binaries that are enmeshed with ideological hang ups that they need not have. The viewer seated in the audience in the cinema is thus outside of these binaries, now newly located as a seat of immense potential. If one viewer is consistently creating and measuring their idea of a film, then a whole audience represents this action repeated manifold times over and it is here again that cinema posits itself as a medium with unique discursive potential. “It is the power each of them has to translate what she perceives in her own way, to link it to the unique intellectual adventure that makes her similar to all the rest in as much as this adventure is not like any other.” (Ranciere, 2009) When a viewer enters the cinema, they may do so individually, but once they are in front of the screen, they cannot help but experience it collectively.

Discursive Dimensions

This dialogical potential of cinema we talk of has a dual function, the audience both engaging in a dialogue with the film and each other. The first comes in the obvious form of the conversation before, after and sometimes even during the film. In this respect the dialogical and discursive elements of the cinema experience fulfil the outlined goals of what cinema should be when film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum describes a system where the collective “uses the film as a means of communicating with itself” (1980). With the capacity for cinema to occupy space in cities, this ‘appropriation’ then becomes double-fold, an appropriation of

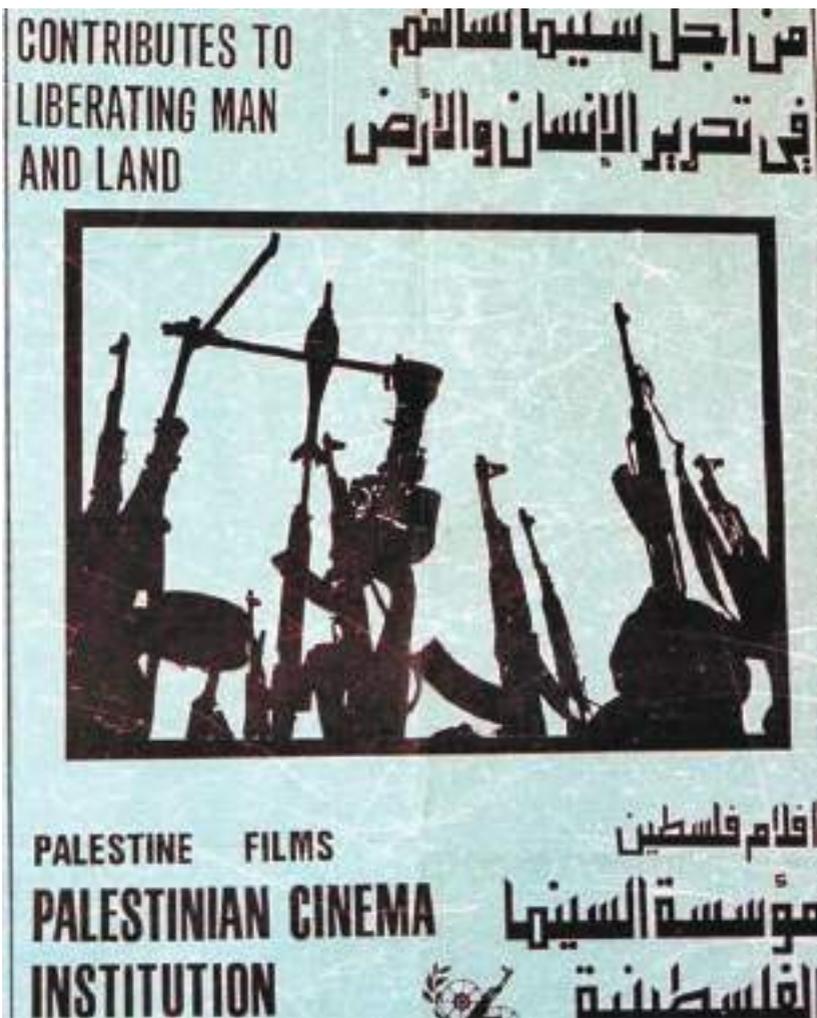
space and narrative. This symbiotic appropriative relationship then has within it a distinctly charged potential for change, encased within it a power to change social relations.

Networks of Solidarity

Bridge of the Red Army, the workers council in Austria, showed revolutionary films in Vienna's second district and had an apparatus that distributed radical literature at these screenings. When such collectives and initiatives linked up with other such projects, even if they were decidedly less political, the potential to establish counter infrastructures for public, free cinema events grew, as is the case when Expanded Cinema was formed. Expanded Cinema was an umbrella organisation consisting of cinema groups from Cologne, Munich and Vienna. From the 1970s this organisation worked together across these urban centres to establish "cinema pubs, political film clubs, student cinemas, communal cinemas and early forms of programme or art-house cinemas". Such ventures are real, historical examples of cinema interacting with the public and social dimensions in a wholly positive way, shaping a consensus which challenges the status quo in ways both artistic and liberatory.

The State of Things

The status quo faced by a 21st century citizen of Ireland or indeed any western state is a uniquely different one than the sociopolitical circumstance would have permitted in any of the periods highlighted above, from the early 1900s nickleodeons in the US or the latter free film clubs in mid twentieth century Austria and Germany. The early 1900s were a time of an old order falling away with rapid technological advancement and a turbulent economical and social environment. These changes and gaps in governmentality allowed for new public spheres and ways of organising to emerge, such as the nickelodeon. Whereas in Austria around that time these communal film clubs would have taken place during a high tide in European social democracy, where Keynesian economics reigned and there was a large influx of government spending, thus making it easier for such experiments to happen. The situation in Dublin in 2022 is different to both of these in that it finds an entrenched capitalism, reanimated through neoliberal ideology, with its claws sunk



into the neck of the city and Ireland more broadly. The general consensus is one of privatization and austerity, and increasingly the ability for alternate social arrangements within that are quashed as public space becomes privately managed and cultural hotspots become routed and turned into places of profit and capital circulation. “Urban space in Dublin has been subjected to an intense process of privatization, a process linked to the dynamics of financialization.” Eight years on from when those words were written, ‘the great enclosure’ is much further along, the forces of capital even more emboldened.

Artwashing

And it must be said that capital, vampire as it is, doesn't hesitate to dig its fangs into art and look toward culture not just as a place where financial capital can circulate, but as a place where social capital can be generated. This process, described as artwashing, is where the forces of capital use art to both improve their public image and obscure their *raison d'être*, that is, profit. We see examples of this happening increasingly in Dublin. A particularly relevant example is that of the Wilton Park adjacent 'Living Canvas' on the southside canal, a project which IPUT chief executive Niall Gaffney said they initiated to "enhance the public realm". The screen features art and design from a curated selection of Dublin based artists and on a cursory level appears to be of benefit to the city's cultural landscape. But this bait and switch obscures the real order of things, "a rhetorical device which masks the primacy of private capital with the illusion of public good." Boasting about managing a property portfolio worth "over €2.75 billion", IPUT are one of the architects of the cultural degradation of Dublin. Merciless profit extraction and public art, or at least authentic public art, are irrevocably counterposed to each other and no amount of cosmetic, extravagant gestures on behalf of capital can change this. Without a radical public intervention, "the result is that art will continue to be used, when at all, to attract commerce while independent 'authentic' art organisations remain precarious." (Guinan, 2016)

Hope in the Struggle

But the prognosis is not all grim. "Social relations of dependency, trust-care and mutuality can arise when people are forced to sustain forms of life in the city outside commercial interests and state funding," (Bresnahan and Byrne, 2014) and this is true of Dublin, especially considering its position as a beacon of financialization and neoliberal interests. What we see in absence of an authentic government intervention on behalf of the arts in a genuine manner is a burgeoning culture of mutual aid and solidarity among friends and collaborators across the city, where spaces are rented through shared renting and the materials needed for events are shared across many disciplines. This idea of organisation, of mutual solidarity as a method to throw off the shackles of privatization and austerity, is how we can imagine an community based, emancipated cinema project, a project which facilitates a phenomenological and discursive experience with the already outlined contours.

Describing the end of a film in a cinema, Resi Langer quoted in the book *The Promise of Cinema* supposes “accompanied by music, everyone streams towards the exits, and what was once a whole disintegrates into atoms, for today. Perhaps tomorrow the individual will once again form a vital part of the whole [...]” (Anton Kaes et al, 2016). The mission, then, of Rupture Cinema is to build a liberated communal watching, is to not leave the formation of a ‘whole’, of the collective, to chance, to not hope on tomorrow for the formation of a cognizant body of viewers but through a rigorous analysis of the given material and social conditions to engender these ephemeral experiences into a framework that is lasting and potent.

Onwards!



Report on Police Repression of Anti-Imperialist Blockade

This short report was submitted by an Anti-Imperialist Front activist in Scotland who participated in the Thales shutdown on the 15th of May.



The international anti-imperialist movement has grown tremendously. Across the world, the hearts of the masses are with Palestine. The international free peoples are putting their bodies on the line for Palestine. And as the Zionist entity escalates its genocidal war on Palestine, concentrated most highly at Gaza, the peoples of the world have escalated in turn. Escalation for escalation!

Here in Scotland, and across Britain, we have seen an uptick of blockades and shutdowns of arms factories. These arm factories are blots on cities like Glasgow, and the Thales factory that overlooks Govan, is one such stain. Govan also has one of the largest racial anti-imperialist populations in Glasgow. It has been shown by the successful blockades of the last 12 months which have achieved their objective of shutting down factories, that relying on and agitating amongst the sympathetic working class people is a key to victory in these blockades and in the entire revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle.

The broad people of Scotland are sympathetic to the struggle against Imperialism, and know that these factories of death do not represent us. Walking around Glasgow or going to a Celtic game, a newcomer to the city would be amazed by the sheer number of Palestinian flags. Cultural events and fundraisers, such as film screenings, are numerous. Even some small businesses donate the profits of some foods to Palestinian charities!

The blockades in Scotland so far have been mostly free of direct confrontation against police. No destruction of tools of destruction and with no violence. Yet! The Imperialists must still attempt to stomp us down. The Thales Blockade was akin to the other blockades, until about 5 hours in, when about two dozen police in uniform descended down.

The pigs were violently shoving and pushing us. Trying to treat us as cattle. Yet, we stood our ground, linked our arms and resisted! The animalistic barbarity of the pigs' rage at the people of Scotland was demonstrated as we chanted: "Who do you serve, who do you protect!"

They were there to protect the profits of imperialists. They were there to serve genocide.

Police are a tool of the Capitalist-Imperialist state. They are there to ensure that the state is secure in its apparatus of repression and exploitation of the working class by the ultra-wealthy Capitalist ruling class.

The repression comes after months of intensifying and escalating anti-imperialist struggle, which the state can see is furthering the revolutionary movement which will one day topple Imperialism and the Imperialist British state. When the state is met with the threat of growing revolutionary movements which poses a threat to the ruling class, it must intensify its outright repression in an ultimately futile attempt to crush the will of the people. The fact that this repression is happening only shows that the anti-imperialist movement is becoming successful in its goal of serving a revolutionary movement to overthrow Imperialism the world over.

Three protesters were arrested in our rightful struggle with the cops. A fourth, seemingly religiously profiled, was arrested after we stopped and dispersed. A disgusting display of the inevitable racism which Imperialist states unleash on their own population as well as the rest of the world.

The cops then had the audacity to confiscate the bags by the Thales gate. This reminds us all of the importance of militancy and operational security. The pigs will play unfair!

The nonsense charges against the four righteous protests were dropped and most of the confiscated items were acquired back through collective reliance on each other. But for many at the cost of private

information. More evidence that the police do not serve us.

To quote Mao “It is good if we are attacked by the enemy, since it draws a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves.” Our enemies might in their language say they support Palestine, but their actions have shown us otherwise.

Let us keep our heads up high, our bellies aflame and our hearts set on a free Palestine!



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Palestine Solidarity Glasgow

15 JUNE | National Demo and
March from Glasgow Green

18 JUNE | art workers meeting
on censorship of Palestine in
Glasgow Life venues

22 JUNE | Cycle for Palestine
| ggeg.org.uk/cycle-for-palestine-registration/

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