

III. Review

Movie Review: *Tomorrow's Freedom*

Why Palestinian Leader Marwan Barghouthi Must Be Freed

by Gerald H. Belsky

Tomorrow's Freedom

Documentary, released December 2022

Directed and produced by Georgia Scott and Sophia Scott

Groundtruth Productions & Cocoon Films

One hour, 37 minutes

Trailer: <https://www.tomorrowsfreedom.com/>

March 22—This remarkable film is about the extraordinary Palestinian leader, Marwan Barghouthi, who has been jailed by the Israelis for more than 20 years, and his remarkable family, headed by his courageous wife Fadwa, a lawyer, who is leading the campaign to free him and other Palestinian prisoners. This documentary was released more than a year ago to wide acclaim in Europe after 5 years in production. In the U.S., it has been promoted only recently. It is all the more relevant today in the midst of the worldwide outrage over the Israeli-engineered and Western-tolerated genocide in Gaza, for the simple reason that Marwan Barghouthi, referred to by some as the “Palestinian Mandela,” is universally recognized as the one Palestinian leader who could successfully negotiate peace with the Israelis with the support of all factions. In every poll taken of potential Palestinian presidential candidates, Barghouthi tops the list.

That is precisely why he has been kept in prison since 2002 by Israeli officials who oppose any two-state solution, while they claim that they “have no one with whom to negotiate.” Barghouthi had been a strong supporter of the Oslo Peace Accords, and still supports

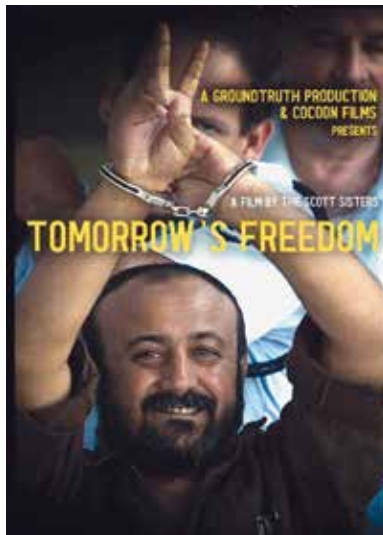
a two-state solution, but has long insisted that to have peace between Israel and Palestine, and for Israel to have security, Israel must end the illegal occupation of Palestine territory in the West Bank and Gaza.

Barghouthi Tortured

The film documents the methods of torture and humiliation used by Israeli authorities over the years to attempt to break Barghouthi’s spirit. At one point they put him in isolation for 1000 days. He has repeatedly, defiantly insisted, as seen in the film, “They will not break my will! The Israelis have arrested my body, but not my soul!”

He has just been threatened with new forms of torture which, his wife Fadwa has revealed, threaten his very life. She and the Palestinian [Commission for Detainees and Ex-Prisoners Affairs](#) have just revealed that, according to lawyers for Barghouthi, he has again been beaten by Israeli prison guards, this time causing bleeding in one of his eyes. She further revealed that during the last three months, as the Israeli genocide has intensified, Marwan has been relocated to different jails five times, and each time he has been assaulted and subjected to even harsher conditions.¹

As the film makes clear, Barghouthi is not a violent person. He was a leader of both the First Intifada as a founder of the Fatah youth wing in 1987 before



Tomorrow's Freedom, trailer

1. “Jailed Palestinian Leader [Marwan Barghouti Beaten by Guards](#),” *Aletho News*, March 19, 2024.

the Oslo Peace Accords, and the Second Intifada after the collapse of the Oslo process following the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin and the massive illegal expansion of the Israeli settlers into the West Bank. He then saw no other alternative to armed resistance to Israeli occupation, after having initially tried mass non-violent grass roots protests on the West Bank, which were violently broken up by Israeli soldiers.

Barghouthi Fights for Peace

He clearly preferred a policy of negotiation for peace, which is why he supported the Oslo Peace Accords. Barghouthi told a journalist, in the only interview that he was allowed to give from his jail cell, “I want you all to know that Marwan Barghouthi is fighting for peace. I am a peace man.... Israel should end its occupation, and end its policy of assassination, its policy of curfew, its policy of demolishing homes ... which will not lead to security. Security will be achieved only by the end of the occupation.”

Through interviews with family members and friends, and using footage sometimes from decades ago, the picture emerges of Marwan Barghouthi, a born leader, who was committed to ending the illegal Israeli occupation. When he was 12 years old, his beloved dog was killed by Israeli authorities outside his home on the West Bank. He joined the Fatah movement and founded its youth wing at 15, later becoming the Student Council President of Birzeit University. Yet he, despite his fierce denunciation of the Israeli occupation, never gave in to rage or pessimism, or hate. Barghouthi is seen in the film smiling, trying to figure out new strategies, providing leadership, and always striving to give people a sense of optimism based in the human spirit of the mind and soul.

Within Fatah itself, where he emerged as a leader and was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council, and reelected from jail, he never “went along to get along,” as so many legislators in many countries do, but was always thinking of new ideas, new strategies. At one early Fatah meeting as a young man, which was shown on a video screen in the film as his family watched and smiled, he went around the room circulating a petition about an independent policy, with his impish grin, as the leadership asked him to sit down; he would say yes, smile, and then keep going!

He was always an independent thinker, constantly

reading books and educating himself as a leader. Arrested at 18, he finished his high school education in jail and then, when released, obtained an MA in political science and history, and later a PhD in jail. Constantly urging his fellow prisoners to educate themselves and obtain higher degrees while in prison, he even learned to speak Hebrew fluently, so he would be able to better communicate with his adversaries, in order to negotiate.

A former Israeli Ambassador to France said of Marwan in the film, “He knows us very well.... He is the kind of man with whom you could strike a deal and he will respect it.”



Tomorrow's Freedom, trailer

Barghouthi gives an interview in this still shot from Tomorrow's Freedom.

Yossi Beilin, one of the architects of the Oslo Accords and later Israeli Justice Minister, who has called for the release of Barghouthi from prison, is pictured in the film saying, “He supported negotiations on the Oslo agreements, and he pushed us.” Beilin asserts that if Barghouthi were to be released from prison, he would become the new Palestinian President.

Longtime Israeli *Ha'aretz* journalist Gideon Levy described Marwan's attempts at peace in the film, as the Oslo accords fell apart and the illegal settlements increased, saying, “He warned us. He went to the central committees of all the Israeli parties begging them to do something before it explodes!”

Barghouthi's Imprisonment

When popular anger finally exploded in the Second Intifada after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon invaded the grounds of the Al Aqsa Mosque with 1,000 Israeli security forces, Barghouthi took leadership of the Intifada and was accused by the Israelis of setting



Tomorrow's Freedom, trailer

Barghouti in court, from Tomorrow's Freedom.

up its military wing. The Israelis tried to assassinate him in 2001, targeting him with a missile that hit his bodyguard's car, killing him, but missing Marwan. In 2002, he was kidnapped by Israeli forces from the West Bank, transferred to Israel and finally tried in 2004 for multiple counts of murder, even though he was never accused of actually killing anyone. He was sentenced to 5 life terms plus 40 years.

He refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli court to try him, so did not offer any evidence in his defense, insisting that as an elected member of the Palestinian legislature, the Israelis had no right to try him. In footage from the trial, Barghouti is shown sitting surrounded by police as Israelis are screaming “murderer” and “terrorist” at him, and he very defiantly, but in a dignified way, explains in English and Hebrew to the mob, and media, “I am not a terrorist. If you want to have security and peace, you have to end the occupation.”

As he smiled and held his chained hands aloft, Marwan Barghouti clearly demonstrated that his will has never been broken, that he is offering the Israelis a pathway to peace. The image of him smiling and holding his hands aloft has become such an iconic im-

age of Palestinian resistance that it is painted on walls all over the West Bank and on yellow flags waved by thousands in mass demonstrations for his release.

Simon Foreman, an international lawyer appointed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to study the Barghouti case and trial, concluded in his report—and stated in the film—that there was no way Marwan got a fair trial. He said that the very kidnapping of Barghouti from the occupied West Bank and transferring him to Israel was illegal. Foreman also noted that the judge in the case stated that Barghouti was guilty of terrorism before she even heard any evidence!

When Barghouti was asked by his interviewer in jail if he supported killing Israeli civilians, he stated emphatically that the Israelis were killing women and children, kidnapping Palestinians, and demolishing their homes. He stated that Palestinians have a right to resist this oppression by any means necessary, but killing Israeli civilians in Israel, he made clear, “No, there should be no killing of Israeli civilians in Israel or Palestinian civilians in Palestine. That should not be part of the game.”



Tomorrow's Freedom, trailer

Former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin, who called for the release of Barghouti from prison and said, if released, he would be the next Palestinian President.

LaRouche Oasis Plan Needed To End Cycle of Violence

As the film makes clear at the end, as enunciated by Marwan's eldest son Qassam, young people in Palestine are caught up in a cycle of violence and do not see a way out, as long as the Israelis carry out a policy of severe repression. And that was the

way it was before the current genocide by the Israelis. “I am sorry to say that young Palestinians have lost confidence in the future ... and I am sorry to say confidence in humanity itself,” states Qassam insightfully.

This tragedy of manipulated violence has been



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On the West Bank Wall, an image of Marwan Barghouti's iconic pose of defiance, with his handcuffed hands in the air.

orchestrated by the British, using their geopolitical games, for over 100 years, and their intention now is to blow up the growing support of the BRICS for a new security and economic development order. To end this tragedy is precisely the purpose of the LaRouche [Oasis Plan](#) for massive water and infrastructure development projects in Southwest Asia, a “peace through development policy to ‘green the deserts,’” so necessary precisely to break out of the entire orchestrated geometry and provide hope for the future.

This reviewer was able to have a short online dialogue about the LaRouche Oasis Plan with Marwan’s youngest son, Arab Barghouti in Ramallah, in person during the question period after the film was shown publicly at the Friends Place on Capitol Hill, a Quaker guest house, run by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, which was also online. I pointed out, after mentioning that the late statesman Lyndon LaRouche had called for Marwan Barghouti’s release from prison 20 years ago, that Marwan had supported the Oslo Peace Accords, and unlike many others, still supported a two-state solution.² I then asked Arab, given that in his remarks

2. “To End the Killing, [Free Barghouti Now!](#)” *Executive Intelligence Review*, Jan. 5, 2024.

he had attacked not only the repression of Palestinians but also colonialism and theft of resources, if he would support the LaRouche Oasis Plan as part of a new security and development order which, by building infrastructure water projects in the region, would give people a sense of hope and optimism, which is the only way a two-state solution could be realized. I also announced that the Schiller Institute would be holding a [conference](#) on the Oasis Plan on April 13, to which he and the Barghouti family were invited to attend.

Arab replied that economic development was certainly necessary to give young people in Palestine a sense of hope, and that he definitely agreed with that.

It is precisely the universal dimension of “peace through development”—which is needed to end the tragedy of the Israel-Palestine conflict—that is provided by the LaRouche Oasis Plan. And that is necessary to ensure that Marwan Barghouti’s and his family’s vision of peace between Israel and Palestine becomes a durable, and enduring peace.



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