

vehicles and ammunition which are used to face the uprising. Rather it extends to that portion of the Israeli security apparatus which is called out on alert as a precaution against anything that might happen on any Arab front. Some may oppose this idea, since Israel has reason to be at ease on this level. Yet even in this case, Israel generally takes all possibilities into consideration.

THE BATTLE OF WILLS

All the losses which I have noted are direct losses, but the indirect losses are connected with the overall balance of forces between Israel on the one hand, and the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular on the other. There is no need for details or dispute here. The overall balance of forces is the sum of all material and moral elements which each party possesses. The Israeli losses were compound on more than one level. However, I can summarize this point in the role of the uprising in the battle of wills, which has been going on not only since 1967 or 1948, but since the start of the Arab-Zionist conflict. The Zionists had occupied our land; then in 1967, they began to occupy our will and spirit. The attempts to dominate our will were launched via multiple points and means. Accordingly, Sadat sunk into the outlying depths whereby it seemed that the Arab will was dominated. Yet at a historical moment, Israel and those whose will had seemed to be occupied were put back at the starting point. Israel not only lost its image as an oasis of democracy; it lost its image as a victim. After forty years of nourishing the newborn child, the victim of Nazism, the world discovered that it was no more than a bastard. Moreover, the Zionist settler came back to the question which he thought he had left far behind, concerning the degree of legitimacy and security on which the Israeli project is based. At this historical moment, a big question arose about the rationality and realism of the Zionist ideology, since it is the basis of the existence of Israel, but is called on to retreat or commit suicide.

Israel doesn't consider its own losses only. It considers every one of our achievements as its loss. In this vein, Israel discovered that the Palestinian will hadn't been destroyed, but is fully intact, and Israel knows what kind of dynamics may be unleashed by that. From a position of total adherence to the PLO as the Palestinians' moral homeland and the guardian of their struggle, the most important achievement on this level is the revolutionary impact of the uprising on the internal state of affairs in the PLO. Much can be said about this point, for there remain many rotten and calcified forms and structures. However, all these will fall in succession with the downfall of the political logic to which they have clung. Moreover, a new balance of forces has emerged in the Palestinian arena which relies not on external elements, but on the process of struggle, since the struggle inside has basically become the standard. To avoid any misunderstanding, what I have said isn't restricted to the different organizational trends, but applies to the totality of the Palestinian structure.

One of the results of this has been the reestablishment of Palestinian national unity on a firm base, not governed by

special considerations but by the profound respect which exists among the militants in the battlefield, who are directly facing the enemy and paying the highest price. While the media has been preoccupied with searching for the identity of the heroes and militants, the simple and expressive response was: National unity - Jihad, Fatah and Popular Front.

Bringing matters back to their beginning, to the roots and simple basics, has ended all illusions. Political concepts have been reformed and cleansed, and what is not yet reformed is on the way to being so. This reformation includes the concepts of political realism, the political - diplomatic work, penetration of the enemy front inside and outside Palestine, the Palestinians, the Arabs, the world, and the relation of patriotism to nationalism and internationalism.

We have gotten the historical moment for which we paid a high price; thus, we will not let it slip from our hands, whatever the cost. In order for this to be a Palestinian and Arab milestone, we don't want the major issues to be lost in inter-Arab politics, inter-Palestinian or international politics. Henceforth, political realism should assume its real meaning of knowing the reality in order to change it, not to submit to it. Similarly, political work is a means of achieving goals, not an end in itself. Diplomacy is to bring others to our position, not the contrary. Both politics and diplomacy are to penetrate and weaken the enemy front, to know ourselves in order to free ourselves from the pressures of illusions, impatience and running after easy solutions.

Demagogy and crocodile tears will not succeed in making one thing of Husni Mubarak, Sadat, Islamboli, Suleiman Khater and the revolution of Egypt.* Demagogy will not shorten the distance between the two sides of Hamra Street (Beirut), since on the left are those who are writing with their hearts' blood for Palestine and freedom, but on the right are those who are still not ashamed to call the martyrs of the uprising «those killed.» Not all of them are Arab even though they all have prisons, exile and repressive means. However, the dangerous thing about this bitterness caused by the repression of our Arab relatives, is if it leads to political color blindness. The Palestinians who haven't distinguished themselves from the Arab regimes are considered those entitled to hold them accountable. In fact, the only Palestinians who should be entitled to hold the Arabs responsible, and who are really qualified to do so, are the Palestinians who can knock on their doors with hands as clean as the blood of martyrs.

This moment is very serious and may not easily come again. To protect it, questions should be asked bravely, for failure to ask the real questions in time has caused the loss of sacred blood in the past... Finally, a stand for the uprising is a stand for freedom, wherever and for whoever it may be. Therefore, any hostility to freedom and democracy is a plan of treason or defeat, however good the intentions may be. ●

* Besides referring to Mubarak and Sadat, the two Egyptian presidents who surrendered to US and Israeli dominance, this refers to Khaled Islamboli who assassinated Sadat, and to Suleiman Khater who on October 5, 1985, shot seven Israelis who had trespassed into the Egyptian security zone in the Sinai, and was later murdered by the regime's forces while imprisoned.