

such a situation, the Palestinian does not fight for land, statehood and a flag alone, but primarily against a series of inhuman ideas and practices, because the Palestinian cannot acquire a democratic state without defeating Zionism with all its consequences. For sure, the Palestinian does not fight for abstract principles. Nevertheless, to forget principles while fighting renders the struggle meaningless.

Since Zionism is the incarnation of racism, fascism and colonialism, its opponent political project can win only if it constitutes the antithesis, the real personification of human fraternity, democratic mentality and true freedom. This is why we say that the Palestinians defend their homeland to the extent that they defend humane, revolutionary ideals. Those who are busy throwing stones are in their daily struggle manifesting ideals; with creativity, they convert stones into revolutionary weapons.

There's no room for formal debate in the Arab-Zionist conflict. Formalism deletes man and limits itself to abstract symbols. It may say, «The Palestinian has lost his land, and is in need of one; he has no state, he needs one; he lives in camps; he needs cities.» The problem, however, is not that simple. When the Palestinian lost his land, he became a refugee; he became a miserable person living on the outskirts of urban centers, waiting for alms; he became the ugly element which detracted from the beauty of cities; he is different, and being deprived is the reason for his difference. When the Palestinian lost his independent political entity, he became dependent, impotent and unable to settle his own affairs, in urgent need of a protector. That is, he lost his freedom as well as his own aspirations. Through life in camps, the Palestinian has become completely alienated. He became the defeated, the ignorant, the backward, the outlaw who understands only the language of violence. When the Palestinians revolted against the misery of their camps, refused mandates and raised their rifles, they were given new names such as terrorist, troublemaker, degenerate communist, dishonest armsdealer, while maintaining the old negative titles as well. The fedayeen, in the eyes of the enemies of the Palestinian, became a representative of the mafia.

The Palestinians don't fight Zionism because of superficial speculations based on land. They fight based on their own history which is well aware of oppression, alienation, persecution and annihilation, well aware also of Arab Zionism which sees danger not in the Zionist entity, but in the Arab who supports the Palestinian. For forty years of exile, the Palestinian has known classical Zionism as well as new Zionism, i.e., Arab Zionism represented by the reactionary Arab regimes which are against freedom and maintain an open and disguised alliance with Zionism in order to fight all Arabs who call for freedom.

Palestinian consciousness has not come about as a result of abstract meditation, or sheer yearning for a remote homeland, as if the problem was the fact of their existence on land which is not theirs. This consciousness has been built up within the old, permanently renewed conflict between the Palestinian and the Zionist, between the Palestinian and the Arab reactionary forces who are based on oppression and persecution. Such consciousness has evolved within the framework of practice and practical confrontation, leading to the reformulation of the Palestinian as an oppressed person fighting oppression, racial discrimination and dependence. Within this framework,

the difference between the Zionist and the Palestinian is not manifest in the problem of usurped land, but on the level of values, practices and world outlook. The Palestinians are fighting for their land and right to exist, but this fight does not acquire its full meaning unless it is a revolutionary struggle for national liberation and social revolution, and against the imperialist project in the Middle East. This is why Palestinian consciousness constitutes the direct antithesis of Zionist consciousness, why the defeat of Zionism is the essential precondition of the realisation of a democratic Palestinian state.

The Palestinians do not fight for an abstract political form, a formal entity or a dependent institution. They are fighting for a state in which they can materialise their free human existence; hence, the impossibility of reducing the legitimate Palestinian aspirations into a false political settlement, Camp David-style. Their legitimate rights stem from the very nature of their tragic experience which has three dimensions:

First is the moral one since the Palestinian cannot be a human being with character unless he resists occupation and fights to restore his homeland. Fighting for one's homeland is a positive human value in itself. Patriotism in this sense is the image of developed human consciousness in its noble form. Second is the emotional dimension which is universal human aspiration. To become what he now is, the Palestinian who is throwing stones has gone through decades of pain and persecution, becoming aware of the significance of the misery of the tent, the ugliness of occupation, of babies dying because of thirst, of the savage Arab persecutor, etc. The Palestinian has become the image of the accused a priori - the terrorist in some western countries, the saboteur in some Arab countries, the anti-religious in some Islamic countries, etc. He is con-

Burhan Karkutli

