

lians. Rabin recently said that 120 had refused service in the territories (*Middle East International*, July 22, 1989); all but four are reservists. According to the Israeli draft resitors organization, *Yesh Gvul*, 90 soldiers have been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the territories (*Al Fajr*, September 25, 1989). In early summer 1988, 12 army officers were removed from their posts in the Gaza Strip. In September 1988, 16 were arrested in connection with a scandal whereby 60 (some report more) wangled their way out of army service.

Sending in special units aimed to counter demoralization, but this generated new phenomena which affect the military's unity - the cornerstone of all Israeli security concepts. Paratroopers and other elite units are reported to be disgusted with the barbaric state of affairs reigning after the increased deployment of the Golani, Givati and border guards (*Al Fajr*, August 21, 1989). More recently, special companies have been established composed of 18 to 21-year-olds, to serve in the territories for three years continuously. According to *Al Hamishmar*, July 25, 1989, army elements describe these as a «greenhouse for exceptional acts,» referring to terrorization of members of these companies by their own colleagues.

By summer 1988 public statements by military officers made it clear that the manpower and resources being employed to confront the intifada were going to affect the armed forces' programs for combat training and weapons procurement. As Rabin was later to admit: «Riot control and running behind children throwing stones is not the most effective way to train a combat soldier» (*Jerusalem Post*, June 8, 1989).

It is clear that demoralization is not restricted to reservists or the ordinary soldiers. The July 1988 edition of *Israel and Palestine* reported that Chief of Staff Dan Shomron had the Defense Ministry translate into Hebrew a book which argues that French army's efforts in Algeria were doomed to failure; he distributed copies to all the generals under his command. Zeev Schiff (*Haaretz*, July 14, 1989) writes that the military sources who continue to say that the uprising is fading «suffer from the syndrome of Vietnam and Algeria, characteristic of armies trying to suppress a foreign population in revolt... There are several additional criteria besides the number of stones thrown at Israeli soldiers by which to examine the military situation. For instance, can an Israeli visit the vegetable market in Nablus or Gaza, as he could before the intifada? The uprising has removed the Israelis from Arab population centers... The deterrent capacity of the Israeli army against the Palestinian population is weakened, and desperate acts by individuals, like the case of the bus to Jerusalem, prove it.»

Decline of the army's stature

In *Haaretz*, July 16, 1989, Schiff wrote about the decline of the army command's stature since the start of the intifada, because it was «dragged into the crux of a political debate against its will and in this debate there can be no winners.» He notes that it is the first time ever Israeli citizens have attacked the army commander (as happened to Shomron at the funeral of an Israeli sol-

dier) and that politicians hint that the army's operational failure is politically motivated, i.e. that it does not want to win the war. Israelis expected that the war could be won in a single, quick operation, but Schiff says this is impossible. «Likewise, the general command is not acting as though it is a war that will have far-reaching strategic ramifications... the problem is treated as though it's a matter of ongoing security.»

Shomron also implied that the problem is related to political considerations when he told the Knesset Defense Committee: «We can isolate the activists, but we must be careful not to destroy the delicate consensus which binds the IDF in its daily battle against civilians» (*Jerusalem Post*, June 24, 1989).

Castigating the army's performance occurs in the highest political echelons. Trade and Industry Minister Sharon, speaking on Israeli radio, suggested Rabin should resign and said: «For 14 months, the security flaw continues, maybe the worst in our history (referring to the danger of a Palestinian state)... not one of us draws conclusions. No one is resigning, no one is sacked and nothing is investigated» (*Bissan Press*, February 3, 1989). Prime Minister Shamir's call for Jewish self-defense, after Israelis were attacked by Palestinians in May, was not only a threat to the masses of the uprising. It was a challenge to the army's monopoly on defense affairs as institutionalized by Ben Gurion when the Zionist state was established. Shamir later elaborated on this in an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, May 9, 1989: «We hear Jews saying that the state must provide security. I don't like to hear this. It is we who created the state: What is the state, some central body? Times are difficult, and each one must view himself as a partner to the national experience.» While this serves the Zionist right's aims of increasing extremist and settler violence against the Palestinians, it also opens a Pandora's box of questions in a state where the military and security institution has always occupied the pivotal position.

A sober assessment is offered by military historian Martin Van Crefeld of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In an article entitled «The Era of Conventional Wars has come to an end» (*Haaretz Weekend Supplement*, May 12, 1989), he is quoted as saying, «The Israelis are living in an illusion that they still have an army. But that's a mistake. It's a disintegrating structure that has totally lost its deterrent capacity.» He bases his views on the fact that today sophisticated weaponry is less crucial than the motivation of the soldiers and their willingness to make sacrifices: «Now that there is controversy about our wars, this readiness has decreased, while among the Arabs, from whom we have taken everything, it is increasing all the time. This is an important component in deterrence.»

One cannot, however, conclude that the Israeli army will just fall apart. This is ultimately related to how Israel reacts to the continuation of the uprising and the questions this raises: Will consensus evolve for a political solution, or will Israelis maintain a garrison state at all costs? There are, in fact, indications that the army can continue despite the present dilemma. In the previ-