

the French authorities, which was very similar to the intifada, but still the intifada is a rare and unprecedented phenomenon. The Israeli and western theories attempting to explain the intifada have been disproved, one after the other. The intifada is not spontaneous; nor is it just religious fanaticism or a youth rebellion. Rather, the intifada is an explosion which generated a permanent flame with a tremendous capacity for renewal.

The Palestinians have made great human and material sacrifices: Hundreds killed, thousands injured and 150,000 imprisoned at one time or another. Each and every Palestinian, even if he remains at home, will face one of these possibilities: being imprisoned or beaten, or having property confiscated. Therefore, it is better for all Palestinians not to stay home, but to go out and participate in the intifada.

World public opinion

If we examine western public opinion, especially in Europe, and public opinion in many Asian countries, we see a remarkable increase in solidarity with the Palestinian people, resulting from protest against the Zionist authorities' repressive measures. French President Mitterand, addressing the last session of the European Parliament, said: There is no excuse for the continued acts of oppression, whereby human beings are being turned into beasts and victims; here, we see again the eternal contradiction between the oppressor and the oppressed, the murderer and the victim. What is happening in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been going on for too long. I do agree with Mitterand's words, although his response is not always appropriate. For example, concerning Lebanon, his statements have not always been correct, but concerning the intifada, I dare say his words were quite adequate and timely.

I am very impressed by the western media's coverage of the intifada. Despite my appreciation of the Soviet press, I have not read in *Pravda* or *Izvestia* or even *Literanaya Gazeta*,

good and interesting articles and reports in support of the Palestinians, such as those which have appeared in *Le Monde*, *The Observer*, *The Guardian*, etc. or in the press of Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Portugal or even West Germany, and lately Japan. In addition to what the Palestinians themselves have published, the best materials about the intifada have been written by objective western journalists.

By the way, I disagree with some Soviet journalists who, in the name of a «balance of interests», are equating the victim and the victimizer. The difference is apparent in Mitterand's statement, but some of our journalists do not see this difference. You can look at one of our newspapers and see Arafat to the left counterposed to Shamir on the right, or George Habash counterposed to Shlomo Gazit, and so on. If this is what is meant by a balance of interests, then it is wrong. I'll give an example of the balance of interests: Let's consider Palestine as a big house inhabited by a people (the Palestinians); then along comes another people (the Jews), saying: This is the house of our forefathers, so give it back to us. Here the conflict begins. It is obvious that we have to divide the house in one way or another, so that both people can live in it; the question is how to divide it. Some suggest dividing it into two equal parts. Others propose building an additional small room in front of the house, of the kind usually built for dogs, where one people (the Palestinians) can live, while the other people (the Jews) live in the big house. In fact, this is the essence of both Shamir's and Baker's plans.

Soviet campaign needed

Now is the time for a broad unconventional campaign of solidarity with the Palestinian people in the Soviet Union, because the kinds of meetings we have been holding are no longer sufficient. We need big actions like those which are becoming a normal phenomenon in our country. We call them human chains as the chain which stretched from Vilnius to Tallin, or from

Zilnagrad to Gorky Street, or even to the KGB headquarters, and others. The Soviet community, along with the 25,000 Arab students in our country and their friends, should be able to get permission and undertake to form such a human chain. There was an idea to hold a concert in the Soviet Union, at which international stars and rock music groups would perform. Vanessa Redgrave proposed the idea, but it was not met with enthusiasm by our authorities when she visited Moscow to discuss it. Moreover, Soviet artists must not only visit Tel Aviv; they must also express solidarity with the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

There should also be parliamentary activities because the work of the Soviet Supreme Council is no longer restricted to applauding and raising hands in assent, etc. The present council operates very well. It has established a special committee for international affairs, headed by Alexander Tsamakhov who, only two years ago, was the chairman of the Soviet Solidarity Committee and previously was ambassador to an Arab state which was a main party in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, he has detailed knowledge of the conflict. The Soviet Supreme Council should discuss the Palestinian cause, especially in view of the aggressive Israeli practices in the occupied territories. Soviet religious leaders should be more active in solidarity with the Palestinians. Moscow's patriarch issued many appeals concerning the situation in Lebanon, and these were appreciated by the Lebanese. Let us take the example of Beit Sahour, the town near Bethlehem, inhabited by Greek Orthodox Christians - the descendents of the shepherds who found the baby Jesus in the manger. Today, outrageous things are happening there, with the Israeli authorities confiscating the property and belongings of Beit Sahour residents because they refuse to pay taxes to finance the aggression of the occupation forces against them. In the center of Beit Sahour, opposite the church, a detention center has been set up, where detainees are held for many days