

was to warn all the peace forces in Israel, to say: Look, here are the limits; don't cross them. These people went too far. If you want to keep your rights, don't go too far. They also intended to create a situation whereby we must legitimize ourselves daily. They did this by saying: They are extremists, radicals; don't work with them, they are inciters, fake Israelis. In fact, they're Palestinians disguised as Israelis. We say that we're working with Palestinians, but we're Israelis.

All this backfired on the authorities because there is a crisis in Israel. The crisis is one of confidence. And there is not a consensus anymore. Also, because we're based on a certain legitimacy, although we are known as anti-Zionists and radicals, we're accepted today as a component of the peace movement. We're respected because more and more people are realizing that 20 years ago we were alone in shouting: Occupation is bad. More Israelis now say: You were right, occupation is bad. And tomorrow maybe they'll say also Zionism is bad. We have to be patient. So it backfired on the authorities. Instead of isolating us, we had this solidarity and people saying: No, we don't believe the authorities. We know them. Okay. They have radical positions, but they are not terrorists, they are not traitors. They have their positions, and we don't agree with them, but they're playing fair. They have the right to express even these radical positions. So, instead of the authorities cutting us off from the Israeli public, they strengthened our relations with them. In one case, there was an article in one of the major dailies in Israel by a Zionist journalist who made a big joke of the whole incident. He explained that he knew us very well, having used our information which was always accurate. He then wrote: Let's assume that, as the authorities were alleging, the center was financed by George Habash. They said the same thing about *Al Mithaq* and other newspapers, so this is a turning point. George Habash, instead of being a big terrorist, has become the Rupert Murdoch of the Palestinian press. We should welcome such a step.

There are those who say that Israel, perhaps, has the ability now to live with the intifada, therefore rendering it ineffective. What do you think about this?

The idea of living with the intifada is ridiculous. The intifada is, among other things, a war of attrition. You cannot live with a war of attrition. A war of attrition weakens you slowly, but permanently. You can see it everywhere. You cannot take the bus without everyone being afraid that it will be attacked. In the streets, everyone is on guard. There is a situation of insecurity which will grow deeper in the future, I'm sure. Also, the army is being affected. How long can you have reserve soldiers running after kids, making them take down flags from wires and erase slogans from walls? Everyone knows that these actions and stone-throwing are not going to stop. So, there is a deterioration in the situation. People are soldiers and they don't like serving in the occupied territories, but they'll do it once, twice a year, for a year and a half, two years, but they're unhappy as long as they know they'll have to serve there again and again. This is not living with the intifada; no one will accept the idea that we will have to live with the intifada.

Two possibilities are open in Israel and, in fact, the polarization of Israeli society reflects these two possibilities. One is the line which is heading towards a total war against the Palestinian people, including mass expulsion, mass terror until the intifada is crushed by emptying the occupied territories of their inhabitants. But this would mean not only the end of Palestine, but the end of Israel too. This would mean total war with the Arab world. This is it: the apocalypse. Otherwise, you have to make a radical turn. Today we have a substantial minority in Israel which is saying: We don't accept the idea of expulsion and total war, so let's talk. Then you have various answers as to what to say, how to say it, what to talk about, etc. These are the two poles. No one seriously believes that we can live with the new status quo, yet no one believes that we can go back to the situation which existed before 1987.

*Israeli Women in Black protest the occupation.*

