

# We Won the Intifada

by Yishai Fleisher for KUMAH

We won the Intifada.

It's simple: the Intifada was intended to scare the Jews out of living in Israel. Daily terror was implemented and aimed at Israel's civilian society. Mothers with children, bus drivers and shop keepers, these were the targets. Israelis were supposed to hole up, skip town, shut down, and give up hope. The Intifada's planners had very wide ambitions - this was going to be the great push of the "Palestinian" cause. Israelis would die like flies and scurry like rats. Every night Israelis would witness another charred bus skeleton, and scores of body bags filled with Jewish remains. This constant barrage would break the Jews; the death of Israel was finally at hand.

But none of that has occurred. Just the opposite: Aliyah is up, Oslo is dead, the army is strong, and Israelis go on with their lives in spite of it all. We have won the Intifada.

No doubt, the Intifada has brought depression throughout Israel by bringing death to many homes, by slowing down the economy and killing our tourism industry. Yes, there is unemployment, there is malaise, but Israel is solidly trucking through this hard time. We must understand that we have withstood the "Palestinian" onslaught to an amazing degree and we have totally foiled their plot to drive us out of our homes and off of our Land. That is our victory.

Once, when I was in the army, our jeep spotted a stolen Israeli car on its way to an "Area A" zone controlled by the Palestinian Authority. The car fled and we pursued it vigilantly. Alas, when the car was able to beat us to the impenetrable borders of "Area A" we turned our jeep around like a dog with his tail between his legs. The petty street thief had beaten the invincible IDF, a sad state of affairs. That was in 1996. Today in 2002, two years into the cancerous Intifada, our soldiers resolutely penetrate Ramallah, Nablus, and Bethlehem daily. The Israeli Army stands at the perimeter of every major Arab population center. The disastrous Oslo process, which gave land to dreaded terrorists, is effectively over.

Furthermore, our army, whose morale was steadily declining in the past few years, received a great boost when 120 percent of reservists showed up to defend Israel from its attackers in Operation Defensive Shield. Their attitude and their valor repelled the terrorists and reminded Israel of her great strength.

We have many detractors out there, but Israel's crackdown on Arafat, its targeted killings of terrorists, and its sieges of Arab centers have become accepted military tactics without too much criticism from the peanut gallery of nation-states. The Intifada and the Twin Towers disasters have actually garnered support for Israel and its plight against Moslem terrorism. Arafat and his henchmen badly miscalculated the affects of this un-holy war, and although "Palestinian" spokespeople continue to distort truth to the point of absurdity, the world has largely gone deaf to false claims of Israeli atrocity.

However, the most important victory for us Jews in this conflict is the return of Israel's centrality in our modern history. The Arabs have always sought to erase the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel. In the Middle Ages, successive Arab rulers of the Holy Land did their best to erase the marks left by our Temple and by our living presence there. Arabs have always tried to rewrite history to say that Jerusalem is a Moslem city, that the Holy Land is their rightful inheritance. When Zionism began to appear, the Moslems reacted fiercely; they terrorized us and fought bloody wars in the hope of destroying us. Now they are at it again: they threaten our lives, they try to pit the world against us, and they are working day and night to get rid of archeological artifacts which undeniably link the Jews to the Temple Mount.

Yet we Jews are not reacting the way they would like us to, we are not going away.

Amazingly, American Aliyah is up, not down. The Intifada has started a counter-intuitive trend of Israel-consciousness amongst Jews of the exile. Every Jewish newspaper in the Diaspora is infatuated with Israel and every Jewish table is hot with the discussion of Israel's future. The topic of Aliyah is back on Jewish lips precisely because the Intifada has awakened the demon of world anti-Semitism, and the rise of world anti-Semitism has awakened a generation of Jews who otherwise would have been asleep. The Nefesh B'Nefesh plane, which brought over 400 American Jews to Israel in one shot, is an indication of this Jewish awakening. The Arabs are quaking in their keffiyehs at the prospect of another major Aliyah wave.

Recently the Hebrew University released a startling demographic study. In it, Professor Sergio Della Pergola predicts that while only 37 percent of the world's Jewry lives in Israel now, by 2030 more than 50 percent of Jews will live in Israel. Assimilation of Jews in the exile, a high birthrate of Jews in Israel, and global Aliyah are all factored in. One can waste time debating the pros and cons of these figures, but the key point here is the bottom line: Israel's centrality in modern Jewish life is growing exponentially, while the role of the Diaspora is diminishing. Although our enemies wish for the opposite, Israel isn't going away, it's only beginning to arise.

In this current conflict Israel has shown itself to be deeply rooted and unstopably buoyant. The people of Israel have proven themselves again to be brave, strong, and resilient. We have stopped the "Palestinians" from achieving their objectives and we must continue to fight to achieve ours. Israel's resolve in the face of constant terror, war, and economic adversity is Israel's great victory over all its enemies. The Intifada is nothing but a tick on our national history, which has been ticking for around 3500 years. Israel is our home and it is our destiny, and no bunch of liars and terrorists can take away what's rightfully ours.