

Encouraging Women Terrorists

by Itamar Marcus, Director

Introduction

Since the first suicide bombing by a woman this past January, there is a growing movement directed by the Palestinian Authority (PA), to advance the ethos of the Palestinian Woman Fighter. This includes the glorification of woman terrorists and suicide bombers as symbols to be admired and imitated. The PA is now transmitting very clear messages to its female population, that they should see themselves as full and active partners fighting alongside Palestinian men in their attacks against Israelis.

“Partners in All of Life’s Demands, Including Militaristic Ones”

An article appearing this week in the PA daily implores women to see their role as equal to men’s including the following admiring the woman’s role as terrorist:

“Her only wish is to carry out guerilla actions, so that her actions too would be added to other heroic acts done by women. She sighed, and wondered why women were not being drafted to the fight. Are women not man’s partner? Are women not expected to be full partners in all of life’s demands – including military ones..?!”

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* (Fatah), March 11, 2002]

This article also praises the two “heroines” who have acted as suicide bombers in recent months: “Recently, the heroine Wafa Idris (the suicide bomber on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem) succeeded in carrying out the bombing in Jerusalem, and subsequently, the Martyr Da’arin Abu Asiyah (suicide bombing at a roadblock). These actions... attest to the Palestinian woman’s capability to perform successful actions...”

The Palestinian Television (PA TV) as well has recently praised the female suicide bombers. A rerun of an old clip was rebroadcast which stars a female singer. While she sings, pictures of extreme violence appear in the background. Suddenly, she is not merely a singer, but rather a warrior wearing an army uniform; she continues singing and encouraging violence, singing of her desire to fall as a Martyr:

Shake the earth,
Raise the stones
Allah Aqbar, Oh, the young ones.

You will not be saved, Oh Zionist,
From the volcano of my land’s stones,

**You will not be saved, Oh Zionist,
From the volcano of my land’s
stones,**

**You are the target of my eyes,
I will even willingly fall as a *shahid*,
Allah Aqbar, Oh, the young ones.**

[PA TV (Fatah), March 10, 2002]

The Palestinian media publicized opinion polls taken recently, showing that “the desire to seek revenge is greater among women than men. For example, 96% of female university students expressed support for suicide attacks, according to one of the surveys conducted.”

[*Al-Ayyam*, “The Eighth Day” Supplement, Feb. 7, 2002]

Wafa Idris – Creating a New Symbol and Ethos

The growing propensity to encourage women to adopt the role of fighters was sparked by the suicide bombing in Jerusalem, as the bomber, Wafa Idris, is presented by both men and women in the Palestinian Authority as an ideal role-model, worthy of imitation.

“...Raviha Diyav, member of the administrative staff of the Palestinian Women Union emphasized that the participation of Idris in the attack shows the determination and the resolve of the Palestinian woman to participate as full partners in the national struggle, alongside her brothers...”

[*Al-Ayyam*, Feb. 1, 2002]

“...Attaf Yussuf, a columnist in the media supplement *The Women’s Voice*, claims that ‘Palestinian women desire to participate alongside the men in all aspects of the struggle.’”

[*Al-Quds*, March 1, 2002]

Men in the Palestinian Authority, too, glorify her:

“...She represents the major role of the Palestinian woman in the national struggle...Zaad Abu Ayin, a member of the high-ranking Movement Committee of Fatah, delivered a speech in which he praised the heroism of Idris, as a member of the *Shahid* Brigades of Al-Aqsa, belonging to the Fatah Movement...”

[*Al-Ayyam*, Feb. 1, 2002]

In addition, a framework for terrorist activity has been created in her name:

“Senior officials in the Fatah Movement have said that the *Shahid* Brigades of Al-Aqsa... has recently created a woman’s brigade, in order for women to take an active part in the war being fought in the Palestinian areas. The purpose of this brigade is to carry out attacks on the Israeli home front. The troop has been named ‘the brigade in honor of the Martyr Wafa Idris.’”

[*Al-Quds*, March 1, 2002]



There are signs signifying that the Palestinian Authority intends to turn Idris into a new symbol for young Palestinian girls. Immediately following the suicide bombing, the Palestinian Authority held a memorial demonstration in her honor. A photograph of this demonstration appeared in the Palestinian press, in which posters bearing her picture with the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the background are shown, together the following caption: “The Fatah Movement... eulogize with great pride the heroic Martyr, of the Al-Amari Refugee Camp, the Martyr Wafa Idris.”

[*Al-Ayyam*, Feb. 1, 2002]

The demonstrators waving these posters are young girls, appearing to be perhaps first-graders.

Ethos of the Palestinian Woman Fighter – Dalal El Mughrabi and Others

One of the heroines of the Palestinian Authority has always been Dalal El Mughrabi, the female terrorist who participated in the kidnapping and murder in 1978 of Israeli bus passengers returning home from an outing. Despite the fact that this terrorist attack transpired many years ago, and although the event resulted in the killing of the male terrorists as well, the Palestinian Authority notes its anniversary, glorifying the personality and heroism of the woman participant - Mughrabi. In August 2000, for example, she was described in a cultural program in these words: “Dalal is a symbol of Palestine...in this presentation we portray for the audience the role of warrior of the Palestinian woman, she who struggles...she who is building the Palestinian society...we remain faithful to Dalal, she who is part of the Palestinian consciousness...”. Immediately following this portrayal, an excerpt from a film was broadcast, in which Palestinian actors portray Israelis with skullcaps threatening a Palestinian at gunpoint, while interrogating them in the cemetery where Dalal El Mughrabi is buried. Mughrabi then appears above her gravesite, as a woman much alive and talking.

[PA TV (Fatah), Aug. 31, 2000]

Her name even appears in crossword puzzles in the PA daily newspapers, e.g. “Famous Palestinian Martyr” – “Dalal El Mughrabi.”

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* (Fatah), July 23, 2000]

The article appearing this week in the Palestinian Authority press made another connection with Dalal El Mughrabi, including a revolting libel attributing to Ehud Barak abuse of Mughrabi's body, because of the Israelis' “shock and fear” of the Palestinian warrior:

“Most of the stories of the woman Martyrs... are still connected to the death of the Martyr Dalal El Mughrabi... who, with her small group, succeeded in causing the greatest number of casualties amongst the Israelis. The head of the Israeli government and the Israeli security services went mad, as can be seen by the actions of the then Chief of Staff of the Israeli military, Ehud Barak, who stuck the bayonet of his rifle into the Martyr El Mughrabi's body, as well as performing other atrocities on intimate parts of her body – a testimony to both the level of their fear of the Palestinians and their fury even after the Martyrs had fallen. Despite the passing of so many years since the falling of the Martyr El Mughrabi, we feel as if her heroism was at work in yesterday's event...even if a Martyr is absent from her body, the spirit of her struggle continues to live within the consciousness of women aspiring to perform similar acts of heroism, and especially in times when the Sharon government escalates its acts of aggression and oppression against our people.”

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* (Fatah), March 11, 2002]

In another women's supplement in the Palestinian Authority press other woman terrorists are glorified:

“Women have been involved with the Palestinian national struggle since its very onset...Wafa is the first woman to make such a sacrifice, yet she is not the first to participate in this struggle. In the first military actions, subsequent to the occupation in 1967, women were participants. We all recall such names as Fatima Barnai, Rasima Uda, Mariam El-Shachshir, Aisha Uda, etc...these names, creating fear and horror in their hearts [of the Israelis]...”

Thirty-three years ago today, on February 21, 1969, two girls prepared for a mission, travelling to the supermarket, and wandered around with packaged explosives. Rashida placed the

explosives she had, and then Asiyah, too, left the explosives she had been carrying in her bag, and as they exited they heard the explosion, resulting in the death of two and wounding eight others.

The second package was meant to explode later, but a police officer found the package before it went off. Several days later, an explosion occurred in the cafeteria of the Hebrew University. This attack resulted in twenty-eight wounded. This action was perpetrated by Mariam El-Shachshir from Nablus.

[*The Women's Voice, Al-Ayyam*, Feb. 28, 2002]

The Present Fighting

During the fighting of the last year and a half, although the women did not assume an active role in the fighting until recently, the Palestinian Authority still attempted to encourage and praise any connection between the women and the war. One example is an article featured over a year ago in the Palestinian Authority's press, describing the "good girl" as one who wants an M-16 for her wedding:

Headline: "He who marries a good girl will not be asked for a high bride-price - a girl marries a warrior, and asks for a rifle in place of a dowry..."

"...the bride-price Jasmeen requests is a modest but strange one, an M-16 automatic rifle. Instead of asking for money and jewelry, the twenty-eight year old Jasmeen requests from her fiancé to acquire a weapon for her so that she may join the fighters of the intifada. Jasmeen is an alias she assumes in order to escape the persecution of the occupation forces... "I do not want gold, or a diamond ring, or jewelry, but rather an M-16, and if only I can acquire this I will wish for no more to be paid by my fiancé." Her fiancé, who is also a fighter, promises such a rifle to his bride-to-be... a slender girl...she does not appear to be a warrior – and yet she has been active in the intifada for a number of months already. At first she supplied information regarding routes to the places of fighting, supplying ammunition, food supplies, water and means of communication to the fighters, and through publicizing opinions on the internet. Now Jasmeen says she has learned how to put together a rifle, has done target and shooting practice, with her parents' encouragement..."

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida (Fatah)*, March 10, 2001]