

Unbreakable

Ali Al-Asfa

The first time it happened, I was asleep, curled up with my 'Kieshen' beside me, and awoken by the sound of explosions, and the sonic boom of the jet, which had already passed overhead. Since I was, as always, fully clothed, and wearing my boots, it took only seconds to run outside. All I knew is that we were under attack. Other fighters were already outside, or running alongside me, but there were no enemy soldiers to confront. The war-plane, one of three, had flown out over the sea, and was already returning. We had no missiles, or heavy weapons, with which to confront it, and were told not to waste ammunition by firing. We found what little shelter we could, behind rocks.

The plane had arced round our small camp, dropping bombs on other positions, but when it returned, so low in the sky, nothing had prepared me for its vastness. It seemed like a huge spaceship, with the flashing lights on its belly, adding to the effect. It was so low, it felt like I could have reached out, and touched it, the seams and bolts on its skin were clearly visible, as was the face of the pilot within. The machine fired rockets, and spat cannon fire. The pilot saw me clearly, as I looked up, together with my comrades, but he was already flying past. As he went over, I could see two other planes, bombing the nearby town, where only women and children, and some old men, lived.

Thankfully we suffered no casualties that day, but it was not the same in the town, and in the afternoon, some small boys came to show us the large pieces of twisted metal they had found, parts of Israeli cluster-bombs. The bombing had taken place in support of the Lebanese Falange, the fascist militia, the Zionists perversely supported, and with whom we, and the Syrian Army at that time, were engaged in fighting.

Over the following weeks, and months, we were subject to regular air raids, almost always at first-light, but they could come at any time, as could shelling from the sea. There would be three planes, and they would make two or three bombing runs. We would check everyone was uninjured, go for our morning run, exercise under the strict instruction of our sergeant, Ali Hassan of Gaza, and then have breakfast. The air -raids became like a diabolical alarm-clock, with which we started our day.

The war-planes ruled the skies unopposed, except in Beirut, where there were heavier weapons, and the sight of an Israeli jet would be met by fire from hundreds of heavy 'Deutchka' machine-guns, mounted on Chevy trucks. The same was true of towns like Sida, which the Zionists bombed regularly. Fatah, at that time, possessed only one SAM-7 missile, and the order to fire it was not given.

Back at the camp, frustrated by the impunity of the enemy, we begged to confront them with the few heavier machine-guns, and more plentiful RPGs, we possessed. On one occasion, permission was granted, and we waited in the shallow valley, which the planes used as a path to our camp. Hiding behind huge boulders, we armed our weapons, and prayed for them to come, but on that day, they never did.

We were fighters, committed to the armed struggle against the Zionist entity, and their fascist proxy army. Despite our frustration at the inequality of our arms, and the fact the cowards rarely got out of their machines to fight us, we considered ourselves legitimate targets. We were not like the innocent people of Gaza, who have absolutely no way of either defending, or protecting, themselves, and on whom much bigger bombs, and in vastly greater numbers, have rained down relentlessly. I saw many terrible things in my years as a fighter, I witnessed many cruelties, and suffered many hardships, but they were as nothing compared to what the children of Gaza are subject to today.

However, I have absolutely no doubt that the courage of the Palestinian people will not fail them, that the viciousness of the Israeli genocide will not break them, and that one day the Colonialist Zionist state will be nothing more than a sickening footnote in history, which some will look back on in shame.

Free Palestine!

The Library of Unconventional Lives

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