

in which he asserts that the Bible and the values of monotheism bear the metaphysical principles of anti-totalitarianism, and that the notion of resistance is deeply rooted in Jewish philosophy.

His latest book *Les Aventures de la Liberté* (The Adventures of Freedom) is an instructive, caustic account of the French intelligentsia who have marked the century since the Dreyfus Affair. Not even the most revered thinkers are spared for having supported totalitarian ideologies.

Since his first visit to Israel in the late 1960s, he has been a committed and close friend of the Jewish state. As he himself puts it, he has a "a blood tie" with Israel to such an extent that when referring to Israel, he repeatedly uses the pronoun "we."

During his recent visit, we met at the King David Hotel, the morning after he appeared at the conference on "The Intellectual and the Struggle for Freedom" – the subject of his last book. Surprisingly, he was not wearing the characteristic open-neck white shirt which has become his trademark.

***CONTACT: Israelis are often cynical about Jewish intellectuals in the Diaspora who judge events in Israel and the Middle East from a safe, comfortable distance in a simplistic way. Having witnessed the repeated Scud missile attacks on Tel Aviv, has your position regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue changed?***

LEVY: My brief stay was merely the expression of symbolic solidarity. Ostensibly, it did not change my views. Still, the experience provided new images and impressions:

First, the image of the Scuds altered a belief shared by many Diaspora Jews that Israel is confronted with a crucial problem of borders, that its fate rests on the Jordan River region. It showed that this country's security depends not only on the enlargement of its perimeter. This remains a powerful image.

The second image is the sight of Palestinians dancing on the roofs at each Scud attack. We thought those Palestinians were possible partners for dialog. While I still think they are necessary partners, witnessing this behavior will undoubtedly dampen some enthusiasm.

***Doesn't this behavior betray a moral and political immaturity on their part, undermining the prospect of dialog?***

Yes, indeed. But Israelis can't afford to wait until the Palestinians become politically mature. It is imperative that Israelis come up with ideas and take new initiatives immediately.