

the Other Israel

Newsletter of the Israeli Council for
Israeli-Palestinian Peace

August, 1983

№ 2

Editor: Adam Keller

Editorial Board: Uri Avnery, Matti Peled, Yaakov Arnon, Haim Bar'am, Yael Lotan,
Yossi Amitai

Introduction

In the last few months, the annexationist forces in Israel have suffered several setbacks. The biggest of these was, of course, the growing unpopularity of the Lebanon War in Israeli public opinion. Another setback was the discovery of fraud in the sales campaigns of companies building settlements in the occupied territories. A third was the victory of Center-Left coalitions in the student unions of Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem universities. These unions have long been strongholds of chauvinist and racist activities. In all cases the right wing lost the support of ordinary, non-political people who, even without being part of the Peace Camp, object to being killed without cause in Lebanon.

It was almost inevitable that the annexationist forces would seek to counterattack, and so they did, choosing the ground most favorable to them - the city of Hebron, near Qiriat Arba, the oldest, largest and most determined settlement of hard-core "Gush

Emunim" fanatics. Skillfully exploiting the killing of a yeshiva student in Hebron market, the settlers started a campaign whose ultimate aim is a massive deportation of the Arab population. The Israeli Peace Movement had to mobilise its supporters to counter this, while not abandoning its struggle against the Lebanon War. The two-fold task was made easier by the growing identification of various groups of soldiers, mothers, students, kibbutzniks and others, with the anti-war struggle.

While all this is going on, many of us are also watching, with great concern, the struggle unfolding between the PLO and Syria.

All these subjects and others, are dealt with in this issue of "The Other Israel".

We hope it will interest you, and will be glad to hear your suggestions for improvements in coming issues.

The Editor

CHRONICLES OF THE PEACE STRUGGLE

This section, which will be a regular feature of "The Other Israel", will chronicle in detail the many-faced struggle for peace going on in Israel. Most of the events mentioned are small in themselves, but gain their true significance when presented together. To give a truly comprehensive picture, we have presented not only the actions of organisations belonging to the Israeli Peace Camp proper, but also those of persons and groups who are not part of it. Sometimes the spontaneous actions of previously non-political citizens, or the unorthodox position adopted by a personality belonging to the political or military establishment, may have as much, or even more, importance than a carefully thought-out action by an existing political organisation.

The Peace Struggle is manifesting itself in many forms: in overt political actions, such as demonstrations and petitions; in various art forms that have political content; in litigation touching on political matters, particularly in Israel's Supreme Court and the military courts. All these forms have been chronicled. Included

are also actions taken on issues of Israel's foreign policy as a whole, since that policy is directly linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict. (For example, the growing ties between Israel and South-Africa are directly connected to the growth of racism within Israel, and the same people - like Ariel Sharon - are playing a leading part in both processes).

The chronicles do not include demonstrations held by the occupied territories' population. Such demonstrations, of which there are many, belong to a separate chronicle, that of events and struggles under occupation. Such chronicles are already being published elsewhere, and we had no wish to duplicate them.

The main Israeli peace organisations mentioned here:

Peace Now - Israel's largest protest movement, follows a moderate line and seeks to extend its influence into the political center.

CSBU/CAWL - The Committee For Solidarity With Bir-Zeit University / The Committee Against The War In Lebanon - a protest movement following a more radical line and ready to demonstrate even on very



unpopular issues.

"Yesh Gvul" (there is a border/there is a limit) – A group of reserve soldiers who refuse to serve in Lebanon.

"Parents Against Silence" – an organisation of parents whose sons serve in Lebanon.

ICIPP – The Israeli Council for Israeli - Palestinian Peace – our own organisation, which specialises in legitimising contacts with the PLO.

For a detailed description of these organisations, see "The Other Israel" n^o 1.

The following chronicle covers the period from mid-June to the end of July, 1983.

3/5 – The permanent vigil in front of Mr. Begin's residence, demanding the return of the soldiers from Lebanon, began on May 3rd, continued throughout the period covered here, and is still going on. It is organised by an informal group, some of whose members are former voters of right-wing parties, affected deeply by their experiences in the war.

By accounts in the press, this vigil has disturbed Mr. Begin very much, to the point that some Likud members started agitating for a special law forbidding demonstrations near the private homes of public officials. In fairness to Mr. Begin, it should be noted that he opposed the initiative of his overzealous followers.

18/6 – Students from Tel-Aviv University visit Al-Najah University in Nablus, which was closed by the military authorities.

19/6 – 23/6 – Slum dwellers in Jerusalem establish an "Anti-Settlement" on public land near their neighborhood, to protest the allocation of funds to settlements in the occupied territories.

20/6 – A joint press conference is held in Jerusalem, by Israeli peace activists and representatives of Al-Najah University, to protest its closure.

22/6 – Activists of the permanent vigil in front of Mr. Begin's residence apply to the Supreme Court for an order to end police harassment and intimidation.

– Dede Ben Shitrit, the leader of the slum dwellers' "Anti-Settlement", is arrested and held for several hours, on the charge of illegally occupying public land.

23/6 – The Hebrew Writers' Association of Israel comes out with a demand to bring the soldiers back from Lebanon.

25/6 – In Prague, a delegation including members of the Communist Party, the ICIPP, the CAWL/CSBU, and other organisations, meets with Yassir Arafat and other PLO leaders (see separate article).

– A CSBU delegation visits the Daheishe refugee camp, which suffered collective punishments for demonstrations by its inhabitants.

– 50 reserve paratroopers, including four

officers, whose unit is due to go to Lebanon the following day, demonstrate in front of Mr. Begin's residence – an unprecedented event. They declare: "We have no confidence in the government that is sending us to Lebanon, but we do not refuse to go."

27/6 – A reserve corporal is jailed for 28 days, for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

28/6 – Army chief of staff, Moshe Levy, receives a letter from 100 wives of army reservists, complaining that their husbands are being sent to Lebanon for the fourth time in a year. In a meeting with seven of the group, Levy expresses his regret, saying the situation can't be helped and that their husbands would probably have to go to Lebanon yet a fifth time.

28/6 – 3/7 – A "Week of Palestinian Art" is held at Neve-Zedek Theatre in Tel-Aviv, including plays by the "Al-Hakwati" Theatre of East Jerusalem. Palestinian posters, forbidden in the occupied territories are on sale.

29/6 – A reserve sergeant is jailed, for 28 days, for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

30/6 – 10 soldiers discharged after a month's service in Lebanon demonstrate in front of Mr. Begin's residence and present a petition signed by 36 of their comrades.

– The arts fair, opened in Tel-Aviv, includes a large number of paintings and sculptures with anti-war themes. One such work is attacked by hooligans, and later police officers remove from it some of the more significant parts, on the grounds that it is "causing public disorder".

– A soldier is jailed for 35 days, for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

1/7 – Kibbutzniks from Upper Galilee hold a demonstration, protesting the fact that the Lebanon War (officially still called "Operation Peace for Galilee") is being fought in their name, and demanding that the soldiers be brought home.

– The ICIPP sends a telegram of support to the Hebron municipality, while settlers demand its dissolution.

2/7 – 700 people take part in a meeting of "Doves" belonging to the United Kibbutz Movement (a movement known, until recently, as a stronghold of "Hawks"). The meeting is held, symbolically, at kibbutz Hanita on the Lebanese border.

3/7 – A meeting between Jewish and Arab artists is the final event of the Palestinian Art Week at Neve-Zedek Theatre.

– In the southern town of Ashkelon, anti-Apartheid demonstrators protest the twin-city treaty signed between their town and Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

4/7 – Members of the Knesset Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee tour Lebanon. In a meeting with soldiers they hear sharp criticism, voiced, among others, by an infantry captain who says: "You send us here to die, like King David sent Uriah the Hittite!" The incident sparks sharp argument among committee members and in the press.



5/7 - Shlomo Shechter, who lost his son in Lebanon, attacks government supporters in a letter to a Jerusalem paper, declaring that protest against the war is both his right and his duty.

- A Druse officer in the Israeli Army resigns his commission in protest against the treatment of Lebanese Druse by Israel.

- Three of the soldiers who demonstrated on June 25th are kicked out of their unit for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

6/7 - A hundred refugees from Bir'am, an Arab village whose inhabitants were expelled in 1948, demonstrate in front of the Knesset and demand to be allowed to return to their homes.

- To mark the passing of 13 months since the start of the war, "Parents Against Silence" hold a demonstration in Haifa and a large public meeting in Tel-Aviv.

7/7 - André Dreznin, spokesman of the "Yesh Gvul" movement, is jailed for 35 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

- Kibbutz Kerem Shalom in the Negev protests the exile and house arrest, without trial, of Abdul Aziz Ali Shahin, a Palestinian activist recently released from prison. Mr. Shahin was exiled to a Gaza Strip village situated one mile from Kibbutz Kerem Shalom, which decided to take up his case.

- Late at night, the Hebron municipality is dissolved, after the killing of an armed Jewish student. The ICIPP, "Peace Now", and several Labor and Communist M.K.s. protest this action. The CSBU decides to demonstrate in Hebron on July 9th.

8/7 - Sholomo Argov, the former ambassador to Britain, comes out in sharp criticism of the Lebanon War. Since the attempt on Argov's life was the pretext for the war, this is a severe blow to the government's case.

- "Parents Against Silence" put tables on street corners in Tel-Aviv, collecting signatures for a petition against the war.

9/7 - A hundred CSBU demonstrators are stopped by the army on the Jerusalem-Hebron road. They demonstrate at two army roadblocks, one near Hebron and the other near Daheishe refugee camp. Later, they go to Jerusalem and demonstrate in front of Mr. Begin's residence. About 20 CSBU members manage to elude the army roadblocks, and meet with Hebron's deposed mayor, Mr. Natshe.

10/7 - 15 highschool students, who are due to be drafted within a few months, demonstrate in front of the Prime Minister's office, during the cabinet meeting. They demand not to be sent to Lebanon.

13/7 - At a soldier's funeral at Kibbutz Shamir, in the Galilee, his father, Yosef Galili, cries out: "How long will fathers bury their sons?" This is Yosef Galili's second tragedy: his wife was killed in a Palestinian attack on Kibbutz Shamir, in 1974.

14/7 - In the wake of the Hebron events, a sharp controversy arises within the Labor Party. Labor "hawks" are upset to discover that Labor's election platform does not mention Qiriat Arba,

the extremist settlement near Hebron, although this settlement was founded, in 1970, by a Labor government.

- Many peace activists sign a petition against the arrest of members of the "Ibna Al-Ballad" ("Sons of The Village") movement.

15/7 - At the instigation of a right-wing professor, the Tel-Aviv University decides to stop its financial support to the literary quarterly "Siman Kriah" ("Exclamation Point") - which published a controversial song. In this song, poet Itzhak Laor attacked the "Gush Emunim" settlers, using extreme terms of abuse.

- In a moving interview to Israel's most popular T.V. news program, Yosef Galili speaks out against the war. In the wake of this interview, several right-wing politicians and columnists demand to tighten government control over television broadcasts.

16/7 - Shelli members demonstrate at crossroads all over Israel, to mark the 400th day of the Lebanon War.

17/7 - A military police sergeant is jailed for 21 days, for refusing to serve as a guard at Al-Ansar detention camp in Lebanon.

- 22 Druse reserve soldiers, including a lieutenant-colonel, sign a petition against Israeli treatment of the Lebanese Druse.

- Several members of the CSBU are arrested in Hebron, for demonstrating there. They are released after several hours and told not to come back.

18/7 - After the CSBU threatens to appeal to the Supreme Court, the army allows it to establish a permanent vigil in front of the Hebron military government building, where Qiriat Arba settlers have already been demonstrating for several weeks. (Of course, the army didn't disturb the "Gush-Emunim" demonstrators. On the contrary, army electricity and telephone lines were extended into their tents.)

In the evening, several hundred people participate in a CSBU demonstration at the center of Jerusalem. They demand the dismantling of Qiriat Arba.

19/7 - Settlers attack the CSBU demonstrators in Hebron and tear up some placards.

- At a Jerusalem press conference, the existence of an army cemetery for Palestinian and Syrian POW's, some of whom died in mysterious circumstances, is revealed.

20/7 - "Peace Now" establishes a vigil of its own in Hebron, in addition to the CSBU one.

- 30 Knesset members, mostly of Labor, and a 100 public figures, come out in a public petition against settlements in the occupied territories.

21/7 - Both vigils in Hebron continue. "Peace Now" announces it will hold a big demonstration in Hebron on July 23rd.

- Matti Peled meets the PLO representative in Moscow. (see separate article)

- 200 Druse demonstrate near the Defence Ministry in Tel-Aviv.



22/7 - The commander of the army central command declares Hebron a "closed military zone". "Peace Now" says it will hold its demonstration anyway.

- Two soldiers are jailed for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

23/7 - In the face of "Peace Now's" determination to demonstrate in Hebron, the army decides to allow the demonstrators to enter the city. About 2,000 demonstrators are greeted warmly by the Arab population. At a rally in the town center, the speakers declare their determination to oppose the settlers. Meanwhile, the CSBU vigil continues.

23/7 - 6/8 - An international work camp opens in Jaffa, to help the city's Arab population, neglected by the municipality. Participants include both Jews and Arabs from Israel and volunteers from all over the world.

24/7 - In response to pressure by extreme right-wing ministers, furious at the "Peace Now" demonstration in Hebron, Minister of Defence Arens declares he will not allow further demonstrations by Israelis in the occupied territories. (of course, Arab demonstrations have never been allowed there).

- A second meeting takes place between Matti Peled and the PLO representative in Moscow.

- After receiving dozens of protests by literary figures, professors, M.K.'s and journalists, the Tel-Aviv University decides to cancel its decision of July 15th, and restore financial support to "Siman Kriah".

25/7 - The Army demands that the CSBU demonstrators leave Hebron. They refuse, and again threaten to appeal to the Supreme Court. After consulting its legal experts, the army tells the demonstrators they can stay in Hebron.

26/7 - The murderous attack on the Islamic University of Hebron sparks two demonstrations by CSBU members, in Tel-Aviv and near Mr. Begin's residence in Jerusalem. On the same day, the Supreme Court forbids the army to destroy Hebron's central bus station, the settlers' next target.

27/7 - Uri Avnery visits students wounded in the attack, in Hebron and Beth-Jallah hospitals.

- Two CSBU demonstrations take place, one near the Knesset in Jerusalem and the other in the center of Haifa. In another part of Haifa, the Arab neighborhood of Wadi Nisnas, a demonstration by the Communist Party takes place.

- Major General (Res.) Avigdor ("Yanush") Ben-Gal, previously known as a "hawk", declares in a newspaper interview: "I am ready to talk with PLO leaders... Israel should give up some territory, to satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinian National Movement". Gen. Ben-Gal has been one of the three candidates for the Supreme Command of the Israeli army. He resigned after failing to get the post.

29/7 - The "Yesh Gvul" movement reports that four soldiers, including a lieutenant, have been jailed for refusing to serve in Lebanon, bringing the total of those jailed to 76. One of these four, jailed for the third consecutive time, is a member of "the Border Guards", a unit notorious for its brutality in dispersing demonstrations.

30/7 - Members of "Yesh Gvul" demonstrate in front of the military prison where their comrades are held, demanding their release. Some demonstrators climb a mountain overlooking the prison, raising a giant banner reading "Free the Prisoners of Conscience!"

- About a hundred reserve soldiers who finished a tour of duty in Lebanon demonstrate in front of Mr. Begin's residence, saying "We have had enough of Lebanon - we don't want to see it again!"

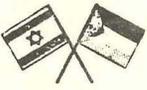
- During the last week, a new documentary film, showing some of the horrors of the Lebanon War, was shown in several places in Israel. This film was made by two reserve officers, who took a film camera with them to Lebanon and filmed what they saw, immediately after the end of the fighting.

31/7 - There is a growing polarisation within the United Kibbutz Movement (UKM). In response to the growth of the "doves" (see July 2ed), UKM "hawks" declare they will cooperate with "Gush-Emunim". The UKM leadership holds a cautious middle line. In a newspaper interview, two UKM secretaries say they had met with representatives of "Peace Now" and agreed in principle to cooperate with them, but refused to support officially the July 23ed demonstration in Hebron. However, many UKM "doves" did participate in that demonstration.

- Two more soldiers are jailed, for 21 and 28 days respectively, for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

A NOTE ON SARTAWI'S FUNERAL

In the article dealing with events following the assassination of Dr. Sartawi, in the previous issue of "The Other Israel", a significant event was unintentionally omitted. This was the participation in Sartawi's funeral, held in Amman, by the Israeli journalist Maxim Ghilan, editor of the Paris-based magazine "Israel and Palestine". Mr. Ghilan met, on this occasion, with PLO leader Abu-Jihad. We are sorry for this oversight, and hope we will be able to keep a full record of all public meetings between the PLO and Israelis - at least, until the time comes when such meetings become too commonplace to deserve individual mention.



THE TRUE STORY OF THE FATAH "MUTINY"

The following account is condensed from an article by Uri Avneri, published in "Haolam Hazeh" (June 7th). This article, the result of an independent investigation using various sources, discloses many facts not published before.

The Syrian president, Assad, had long since sought to break the PLO's independence and turn the organisation into his tool, much as it was an Egyptian tool during the period of Ahmed Shukeiry.

In 1976 he attempted to do so by using the Syrian army in Lebanon, but his attack was foiled by the stiff resistance put up by the Fatah forces, ironically commanded then by some of the officers who are now Assad's allies in the "mutiny".

During the 1982 Lebanon War, Assad became more and more displeased with the PLO's increasingly independent line, which was made possible by the growing prestige of Arafat, as the leader of the resistance during the Israeli siege of Beirut. Assad was particularly furious with Arafat's decision to make Tunis, and not Damascus, the seat of the PLO headquarters. Assad started laying plans, slowly and carefully.

Since 1980, Assad already had an ally within Fatah. This was Nimer Salah (Abu-Salah), member of Fatah's central ("revolutionary") committee. Abu-Salah was an embittered man, estranged from many of his Fatah comrades for personal and ideological reasons. Most Fatah leaders, who are intellectuals, looked down upon Abu-Salah, an uneducated man, who was also known as an uncompromising extremist, regarding anybody who disagreed with him as a "traitor" and, in many cases, causing the Fatah public embarrassment by making extremist accusations. In a meeting with Abu-Salah, held in November 1980, Assad skillfully played on Abu-Salah's frustrations to secure his allegiance.

Through Abu-Salah, Assad also managed to recruit his other allies, the group of Fatah officers headed by Abu-Musa. Abu-Musa is known as a good, hard-working officer. In 1976, the Palestinian forces in Sidon, under his command, had ambushed and destroyed a Syrian armoured regiment that invaded the city. At the time, Assad had ordered the assassination of Abu-Musa, who was severely wounded by the assassin's bullets.

However, in 1982 Abu-Musa, as well as two other officers, Abu-Khaled and Abu-Ra'ad, were drawn, by frustration and resentment of their own, towards Assad, their former enemy. All three are former officers of the Jordanian army, who were trained as professional career officers, and felt contempt towards other Fatah leaders, regarding them as "amateurs" without "proper" military training (a similar controversy had split the Israeli army at its beginning). Also, the three officers, lacking political sophistication, felt a growing suspicion towards the various manoeuvres executed by the Fatah's political establishment. In this, they found common ground with Abu-Salah, and together they formed an extremist opposition

group within the Fatah. Their growing hatred of the realistic political establishment, which gradually turned into a personal hatred of Arafat, made them receptive to Assad's overtures.

The cautious Assad bided his time, carefully preparing himself before striking. He did not attempt to sabotage the Algiers session of the Palestinian National Council, and Arafat succeeded there in maintaining the unity of the PLO. However, after Algiers, Assad held a secret meeting with Abu-Salah, who brought with him the two officers, Abu-Musa and Abu-Khaled. At this meeting, the final preparations were made. Abu-Salah was very confident, promising Assad the support of "75 per cent of the Fatah fighters", and that of "at least 13 PLO representatives in different countries".

This convinced Assad, but he was still very careful. To disarm Arafat, Assad invited him to Damascus, where he was received most cordially. A meeting between Assad and the Fatah leadership was agreed upon, in order to settle their differences. This meeting never took place — instead, the "mutiny" started in the Bekaa (Lebanon valley).

It should be emphasized that the "mutiny" failed completely. Neither 75 per cent, nor even 5 per cent of the Fatah fighters joined the "rebels". Out of 12,000 Fatah fighters in Lebanon, only between 140 and 160 joined. No Fatah unit outside the Bekaa joined them, nor did any PLO representative abroad do so. In the territories occupied by Israel, not one single voice was raised to support them. Moreover, Naif Hawatme and George Habash, who may have been expected to support the "rebels", did not do so. On the contrary, they continued to uphold Arafat's leadership of the PLO, for which Hawatme was called "a Zionist agent" by Damascus propaganda.

Where did the "rebels" go wrong? They started by voicing demands acceptable to many: internal reforms, a return to revolutionary purity, advancement for commanders who fought well and the sacking of incompetent ones; all these are popular demands in any fighting organisation. Many Palestinians thought these demands should be democratically discussed in Fatah's leading organs. But, soon it became clear that behind these demands was the intention to destroy the PLO as an independent force, and overthrow Arafat, who had become the symbol of Palestinian existence. The "mutiny" became an excuse for Syrian and Libyan units to start shooting at the Fatah fighters, while the Palestinians' enemies in Israel couldn't conceal their pleasure. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Palestinian people closed ranks behind their leadership.

Thus, the Fatah mutiny soon ceased to be such, and became a regular war between the Syrian dictatorship and the independent PLO. In this conflict, Abu-Musa and his handful of men play the inglorious role of collaborators.

While the media report great battles taking place, supposedly between Fatah "rebels" and Fatah loyalists, in reality Abu-Musa and his 160 men play only a small part. Most of the fighting is being done



by regular Syrian army units, helped by the Lybian brigade stationed in the Bekaa, as well as by members of Al-Saika, an organisation of Syrian agents, and by members of Ahmed Jibril's Lybian-controlled organisation. In this fight, the Fatah's 12,000 men in Lebanon and the refugee population support Arafat and oppose the "mutiny". Nowhere in the Palestinian diaspora did the "mutiny" find any support at all. ●

THE BATTLE FOR HEBRON

It is not by chance that in July 1983 the struggle for the future of the West Bank centered on the ancient town of Hebron. It was in Hebron that the process of Israeli settlement in the occupied territories began, back in 1968, when Rabbi Levinger's band of fanatical settlers first invaded the town. Skillfully manipulating the divisions existing within the Labor government, the settlers remained in Hebron despite the strenuous objections of the military governor. Later on the government built for them the settlement of Qiriat Arba, overlooking Hebron, on lands confiscated from the Arabs. But the settlers were not satisfied with that — they wanted Hebron itself! The history of Qiriat Arba is filled with violent attacks and provocations carried out against the population of Hebron. In almost all cases, the perpetrators were never punished; in most cases, the authorities were "unable" to find them.

All this served as the prelude for the invasion of Hebron proper, which started in 1979, when the settlers took over the house known by them as "Beit Hadassah", and continued from there, with house after house being taken over by the army "for security reasons" and then handed over to the settlers.

The settlers claimed these buildings on the basis of their having been Jewish property before the 1929 massacre, which put an end to Hebron's old Jewish community — a claim devoid of all moral validity, as the settlers are completely unwilling to accept Arab claims on properties which had belonged to Arabs before 1948.

By June 1983, the settlers had control of four groups of buildings, scattered through the center of Hebron. The next step in their plan was to link up all these footholds into one compact mass. To do this, it was necessary to expel the Arabs from Hebron's vegetable market and the city's central bus station, as well as from dozens of private houses. In this, the Hebron municipality proved an obstacle, since it resisted the settlers' encroachments through all the means at its disposal, such as appealing to Israel's Supreme Court. The settlers, therefore, started a campaign against the acting mayor, Mustafa Natshe, the deputy of Fahd Kawasma (who was expelled in 1980, also at the settlers' instigation). At the same time, the settlers opened a new wave of provocations and attacks on the city's population.

Whoever killed an armed yeshiva student in the market of Hebron played straight into the settlers' hands. Within hours, hundreds of settlers entered the market and set it on fire, in a well-coordinated

"action, obviously planned well in advance of the pretext; late at night, the government dissolved the Hebron Municipality, appointing as "mayor" an Israeli official (ominously, this official is an expert on land-ownership questions); and the settlers were able to use the murder in order to present themselves to Israeli public opinion as innocent victims.

However, their victory wasn't complete. The Israeli Peace Movement rallied its forces and held a series of demonstrations in Hebron, despite the settlers' strong objections; the city's vegetable market, though occupied several days by the army, was returned to the Arab merchants, to the great disappointment of the fanatics; and the central bus station, their second immediate target, was held beyond their grasp by a temporary order of the Supreme Court, pending its final decision.

On the very day the Supreme Court delivered this injunction, the murderous attack on the Islamic University of Hebron took place. Three students were killed and thirty wounded. In the aftermath of this, discriminatory measures were imposed: a curfew on the Arab population, the victims, while the settlers went armed, "patrolling" the streets.

It is no accident that, in a radio interview the day after, Rabbi Levinger voiced openly, for the first time, his true objective: the complete expulsion of the Arabs from Hebron. However, Levinger, and the government supporting him, have not yet won. The Battle For Hebron is on, and to win it, the Israeli Peace Movement will have to muster a determination as great as Levinger's.

Comment

CAN THE AMERICANS SAVE US FROM OURSELVES?

This article was written several weeks *before* the statements made by American officials, in favor of letting existing Israeli settlements remain in the occupied territories. Of course, these statements reinforce the theme of the article.

I think it was the American diplomat George Ball who first articulated the idea that the U.S. should force Israel to change its policy vis-a-vis the Arabs — stopping settlement of the West Bank and returning all or most of the occupied territories — thereby "saving Israel from itself." At one and the same time such a policy would further the best interest of the United States and, indeed, save Israel from its own foolhardiness.

Many notable Israeli "doves" tend to accept this concept. So much so, that the American press was able to quote some of the most influential doves — mainly from the Labour Party, among them Abba Eban — as urging Washington to stop the massive flow of money and arms to Israel. Such action would not only bring about a halt to creeping annexation but might even, presumably, bring down the Begin government.

According to this scenario, the new government (Labour, naturally) would willingly



acquiesce to the wishes of the Administration and peace would reign forever and ever, Amen. Curtain. (Needless to say that following the uproar in the Knesset and in the press and the sustained attack on the Labour Alignment, all these "sources of information" denied ever having pronounced such unpatriotic sentiments.)

This little incident describes, as well as most, the basic malaise of the "official" or "loyal" peace camp in Israel.

Many Israeli peaceniks subscribe to Ball's underlying assumption, namely, that the U.S. is opposed to the policy of the Begin government with regard to annexation of the occupied territories, settlement there, and the incorporation of Arab Jerusalem and the Golan - not to mention the war in Lebanon. They believe that this assumption represents the bottom line in American foreign policy and they too quote chapter and verse to prove it: the Rogers Plan, pronouncements by leading American spokesmen (who no doubt believe in what they say), American commitment to Resolution 242 and their general opposition to the idea of acquiring territory by force.

Unfortunately, in real life one has to distinguish between words and deeds, between good intentions and politics, between fact and fiction. The fact of the matter is that the U.S. talks from both sides of its mouth and the reasons for this are not hard to pinpoint.

The U.S. has many friends - or clients, or satellites (did I hear someone say vassals?) - on both sides of the Israel-Arab conflict, and they are certainly not adverse to making more. The Americans are a friendly people. And as a responsible international power they would never dream of openly condoning aggression, annexation of Arab territory or the confiscation of the lands of poor fellahin for the greater glory of some crackpot fanatic settlers. (Although recently U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Mrs. Jean Kilpatrick, denied that the settlements were "illegal"). In order to test American intentions - or bottom line policy - one has to examine not the pronouncements but the hard facts: what they are actually doing and, even more important, what they are not doing.

Since 1967 America has been supporting Israel with money - in the form of grants and loans - and other kinds of assistance. The flow of weaponry has turned into an avalanche. There are lots of strictures on the use of these weapons but happily the semantics of "defence" is less strict.

Since 1967, that is, ten years of Labour Alignment and five years of Likud, Israel's grip on the territories has tightened. America's support for Israel's incursion into Lebanon is too obvious to be denied, although in part it was sub-rosa, the Haig-Sharon deal later to surface as the "strategic understanding" - which enabled an ecstatic Arik Sharon to pronounce the Soviet Union (and not the Arabs!) as Israel's foremost enemy.

So now, perhaps inadvertently, trying to win points with the Americans, Sharon gives the game away: behind American support for Israel is American global policy. Nothing less. At the root of U.S. policy in the Middle East is the threat of Russia - as American sees it, and the aim of all the American administrations has been to counteract the influence of its adversary.

This "bottom line" determinant has become more pronounced and more explicit under Reagan who sees any conflict - anywhere from the Middle

East to Central America - as part of the global conflict.

Singling out Israel for the strongest support makes a good deal of sense in light of the general instability of the region and its various regimes, especially after the fiasco in Iran, previously the U.S.'s strongest ally in the area. Certainly Israel is today America's most dependable ally. And who would want to antagonize a really good friend with such trifles as annexation and settlement?

Since 1967, when Israel proved its military supremacy over all the Arab countries, not only has it not antagonized Washington, it has again and again proved its dependability as an ally.

In view of all this, the heartfelt hopes of large parts of the Israel peace movement that America will "save Israel from itself" are groundless and reveal a basic misunderstanding. Of course, America is in a position to force Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. (Remember Eisenhower's telephone call to Ben Gurion in 1956?) But it does not believe that it is in its interest to do so.

As long as Israel's overall policy suits American global strategy, there is absolutely no reason on earth for America to withhold money and arms. If the Israeli peace movement wants to save Israel from itself, it had first better find out if the tail is really wagging the dog. In real life, he who pays the piper calls the tune.

Shmuel Amir

THE OTHER ISRAEL
P.O.B. 956
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

PLEASE SEND A SUBSCRIPTION TO:

Name

Address

Subscription rate:

\$30 for 6 months

\$50 for 12 months

Payment enclosed for:

1 year subscription

6 months subscription

Note to our readers: Some of you have written to us complaining that our subscription rate is too high. We would like to assure you that we are not out to make money out of this newsletter. All we want is to spread a message of peace. But in our world, that costs a lot! However, interested subscribers who find it difficult to raise this sum are invited to pay according to their ability.



PRINTED MATTER
DISET . 757

The Sender

THE OTHER ISRAEL

P.O.B. 956

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

61008

WITHDRAWAL – OR PARTITION OF LEBANON?

While these lines are being written, fourteen months have already passed since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon started. The intended “quick and elegant war” which has killed thousands of Arabs and more than 500 Israelis (not to mention the many injured, homeless and displaced persons), now enters the stage of preparations for the Israeli army’s second winter in Lebanon.

The recent decision by the Israeli government to withdraw gradually, over the next three months, to the Awaly river, is to be accompanied by intensive fortification, road building, etc. Huge sums are to be spent, from Israel’s already very meager budget, on digging in Lebanese soil, about 30 to 50 miles north of the Israeli border. A large part of the money can be expected to go into the pockets of civilian contractors, increasing social inequality in Israel. No withdrawal at all is being envisaged on the eastern sector, facing the Syrian positions.

The reason officially given for the continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon is the Syrian presence in the northern and eastern parts of that country. However, when the Syrian army entered Lebanon in 1976, with the intention of crushing the PLO and its Lebanese allies, it received not only an express invitation from the Lebanese government and a mandate from the Arab League, but also a tacit go-ahead from the Israeli government. Nor did any Israeli government, either Labor or Likud, voice any demand for Syrian withdrawal prior to 1982. The Syrians, for their part, remained remarkably quiet and never made any move threatening Israel. In June ’82 they did everything possible to stay out of the fighting, and signed, on June 11th, a separate ceasefire, leaving the Palestinians in Beirut to fight alone. Moreover, very recently Ha’olam Hazeh reported an Israeli naval blockade of PLO bases in the north Lebanese port of Tripoli, in concert with the land blockade by the Syrian army. All this evidence of the true attitude, past and present, of the Israeli government to Syrian presence in Lebanon, removes all credibility from its official position. The government’s refusal to put an end to its presence in Lebanon raises the suspicion that it has no intention whatsoever to end the Lebanon adventure, despite the growing demand of Israeli public opinion. Very possibly, the government may prefer continued Syrian presence, leading to a partition of Lebanon between Syria and Israel.

The ICIPP does not accept this logic, which is squandering Israel’s resources and the lives of her soldiers. Perhaps, the Lebanese government and the Arab League can achieve the withdrawal of Syrian troops, once the Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanon is complete; in any case, this is a matter to be discussed solely between Lebanon and Syria, and is no reason for a continued Israeli occupation. The ICIPP demands an immediate and complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, as a first and necessary step towards an overall solution of the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel Loeff
Jerusalem

ICIPP ACTIVITIES

In the period covered here, ICIPP members, met publicly twice with PLO representatives. Both meetings took place, by no previous design, on East European soil — one in Prague and the other in Moscow. They are described fully in the following articles. In the same period, Uri Avnery visited West Germany and other European countries. During those visits he met with PLO representatives, as well as with a wide range of political figures.

ICIPP members closely followed developments in the occupied territories, and took an active part in various protests and demonstrations. Uri Avnery visited Daheishe refugee camp on June 8th, after it was subjected to harsh collective punishments. On July 1st, the ICIPP sent a telegram of support to the Hebron municipality, when the government's intention to dissolve it became evident. A week later, on July 9th, Matti Peled was stopped at an army roadblock and prevented from meeting Hebron's deposed Mayor. On July 18th, Uri Avnery protested strongly, in a telegram to the Defence Minister, a reported intention to depose Bethlehem's mayor, Elias Freij, as well. On July 27th, a day after the attack on Hebron's Islamic University, Uri Avnery visited the wounded, met with eye-witnesses of the attack, and publicly denounced the authorities' deliberately ineffectual investigation. On July 31st, Uri Avnery received an official invitation by the U.N. secretariat for a delegation of the ICIPP to take part in the preparatory conference on Palestine, which was held in Geneva on July 4th. The invitation was issued on May 31st and sent, so it seems, through the Israeli Delegation at the UN. It was held up by the Israeli Foreign Office for two months before reaching its destination.

— On July 14th ICIPP members took a leading part in organising a protest petition against police harassment of the Ibna Al-Balad ("Sons of The Village") movement. Several members of this movement, which is active in Israel's Arab villages, were arrested after participating in a public meeting in Italy, together with Uri Avnery and an aide of Yassir Arafat, Imad Shakur. On July 14th, dozens of public figures from many political currents signed a petition protesting those arrests. The petition was published in Ha'aretz.

The ICIPP officially asked the Attorney-General to rule on the question, if the use of the ICIPP emblem is legal. The emblem consists of the crossed flags of Israel and Palestine. In the past, the police several times arrested people wearing that emblem on their lapels, and on May 31th, it confiscated the emblem displayed at the memorial meeting for Dr. Sartawi, in Tel-Aviv. The ICIPP legal experts regard this as illegal harassment, and they asked the Attorney-General to instruct the police to stop it.

As we had, in this issue, a lot of material concerning the meetings and activities of ICIPP members, it was decided to form the material into this special supplement.

ICIPP members also raised their voices on a wide range of issues such as police infringement of artistic freedom (see Chronicles, 30/6); the intention of coalition Knesset members to limit a new welfare law to Jews only, and exclude Arabs from its benefits; the sale of Israeli arms to U.S.A.— backed mercenaries operating against the Sandinist government of Nicaragua; and other issues too numerous to list here.

The ICIPP calls upon its friends to make financial contributions that will enable us to extend our activities in Israel, in the occupied territories and internationally.

MEETINGS IN PRAGUE

On June 25th, 1983, in the context of an international conference that was held in Prague, a meeting took place between PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat, and members of the Israeli delegation to the conference. Among the Israelis who took part in the meeting were members of the ICIPP, the CSBU/CAWL, the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah) and various organisations allied with it. The meeting received wide publicity in the Israeli media, and is particularly significant since it took place at the very time the Fatah "rebels" were demanding to put an end to all such meetings. The following is the personal account given by Dr. Yehuda ("Judd") Ne'eman, an Israeli film director, physician and decorated war veteran, who is a member of both the ICIPP and the CAWL.

"The thing which most impressed me, when I met Arafat, was the contrast between his real personality and his image in the media. While in public he sometimes appears to be tough, aggressive and uncompromising, a personal meeting reveals him to be a polite, gentle, somewhat delicate person. In our discussions, he emphasized a point that he had already made in public: his support for the right of all the peoples in the Middle East, including the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, to peace and security. This is a complete change from the position of "The Palestinian Charter", which regarded the Jews as a religious community without national rights. Arafat also reiterated his support for the Fez Summit resolutions, and for the Brezjniev Peace Plan, which specifically mentions "the Security of the State of Israel". The meeting was held in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Afterwards some Palestinians who had waited outside joked: "Not only have you taken our land, now you have taken our leader as well".

"I hope this meeting has strengthened Arafat's and the PLO's willingness to talk with Zionists

whose positions on the conflict are compatible with those of PLO moderates. I have stressed this point, particularly because The Prague Conference had adopted a strong anti-Zionist resolution. I have stated my position, that Zionism is a national liberation movement which has degenerated, and whose past should not be judged by its present. I also pointed out, to Arafat and other Palestinians, that anti-Zionist slogans are alienating a large part of the Israeli Peace Camp, and that eventually the Palestinians will have to negotiate with an Israeli government composed of Zionists — just as that government will have to negotiate with the PLO.

"The most moving moment, for me, occurred at the conference's first day, when I saw in a corridor a familiar face that I couldn't place at first. I approached him and asked "Do you remember me?". He looked at me for a moment and then asked: "Nablus prison or Tull-Karm Prison?" Then I answered "Nablus Prison!", and we embraced. The man's name is Tayasir Kuba, and he is an important member of George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). I first met him in 1968, when he was serving a three year term at Nablus Prison, while I, a young physician, did some medical work in the prison. That was just a year after the 1967 War. I was then quite confused, I suddenly realized there were many things I didn't know. I sought to make contact with the Palestinian prisoners, and since Tayasir knew English, I was able to talk with him. We had about ten private conversations. I now realize that these conversations formed an important part of my political education. They freed me from many prejudices I previously held about the Arabs, like "Arabs are cowards", "Arab culture is backward and primitive", etc. Then, after several months, he was released and deported to Jordan, while I ceased to work at the prison.

"In our Prague meeting, Tayasir told me he had already been a member of the PFLP in 1968, though at the time he didn't, of course, admit it. This meeting had a great personal significance for me, aside from its political importance. On the political side, in talking with Tayasir and with his PFLP colleague, Bassam Abu-Sharif, I was impressed with their moderate positions, which were in contrast to the PFLP's image as an extremist "rejection front" organisation. Once again I realized the depth of the misconceptions of the Palestinians and the PLO prevalent in Israel".

AN ISRAELI PEACE DELEGATION TO THE SOVIET UNION

On July 15, 1983, an Israeli peace delegation arrived in Moscow, as guests of the Soviet Peace Committee. The delegation included M.K.s Shulamit Aloni and Aharon Har'el of the Labor

Alignment, Maj. Gen. (Res.) Mattityahu Peled of the ICIPP, Leut. Col. (Res.) Benni Barabash of "Peace Now", Nimer Murkus, Chairman of the Municipal Council of Kfar Yassif, and Uzi Burstein of Rakah (the Communist Party).

The delegation visited Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, and held discussions with members of the Soviet Peace Committee, the Institute for Oriental Studies, the Institute for American and Canadian Studies, and various other organisations.

Yuri Primakov, a senior Soviet expert on the Middle East, made clear that the Soviet Union supports Yassir Arafat, and will not accept a return to the situation of Ahmed Shukeiri's time, when the PLO was completely dependent on a foreign Arab state (at that time Egypt). The Soviet experts regard the Fatah "Rebels" as having little weight or coherence. On the question of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel, the Soviet position makes such relations dependent on a substantial change in Israeli policy.

In its letter to the Soviet Peace Committee, accepting the invitation to the U.S.S.R., the delegation set itself three goals: to encourage the search for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the right of both sides to self-determination; to press for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli Forces from Lebanon; and to express support for the proposal to discuss ways and means to end the Israeli-Arab conflict in an international peace conference, where all the parties involved will participate, together with the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union.

During the visit the delegation became convinced that these three goals could be achieved, and that the Soviet Union was willing to contribute towards their achievement. The delegation was also impressed with the wide-spread desire for peace in the Soviet Union — a desire which stems from the very vivid memory of the horrors of World War II.

While in Moscow, the delegation requested a meeting with the PLO chargé d'affaires in Moscow, Mr. Rami Ash-Shaer, to discuss with him the problem of exchanging prisoners of war held by both Israel and the PLO. Matti Peled had been specifically asked by the families of the Israeli POW's and those of the missing soldiers to take up the matter with the PLO office in Moscow.

The meeting was arranged and Mr. Ash-Shaer graciously invited the delegation to dinner at his residence. Unfortunately, the two M.K.s decided at the last moment to refuse the invitation. Benni Barabash called the "Peace Now" leadership in Jerusalem, and was instructed to turn down the invitation as well. The three remaining members of the delegation — Messrs Peled, Burstein and Murkus — did, however, accept the invitation, and raised the question of the exchange of POW's and related matters. A second meeting was agreed upon, to be held after Mr. Ash-Shaer had a chance to consult the PLO leadership. At the second meeting, a detailed proposal in writing was submitted by the Israeli participants for consideration by the PLO leadership. It is expected that that leadership's response will be transmitted shortly.