



the Other Israel

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Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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Introduction

In the last half-year, everybody in Israel knew that Menachem Begin was nearing the end of his career. Many articles in Israel's leading newspapers were devoted to speculations about Begin's health, as if he were a monarch rather than an elected official. Nevertheless, when he did go it came as a bit of a shock to his supporters and adversaries alike, and plunged Israel into a state of uncertainty.

The political and factional struggles that followed Begin's resignation, the complicated maneuvering of many parties and self-seeking politicians, seem almost ludicrous until one remembers that an Israeli prime-minister and cabinet - small, nondescript politicians as they may be - literally hold the power of life and death in their hands. They can send the young men of Israel to kill and die; they control the most powerful military machine in the Middle East; they have a lot of matches with which they can ignite one of the world's most volatile powder-kegs.

Whichever government emerges from the present scramble - whether it is headed by the Likud, Labor or any combination thereof, whether the prime minister is named Shamir or Levy, Peres, Rabin or Navon - one thing is certain: a strong peace movement will still be necessary. The

composition of the present major political parties of Israel offers nothing better than a choice between a government of bold, outright chauvinist annexationists and a government of weak politicians holding, basically, a watered-down version of the same chauvinism. Thus, until new parties and political forces emerge, the Israeli peace movement must preserve its independence and integrity.

To struggle against annexationism and racism, to defend democratic rights and freedoms (for in Israel the enemies of peace are also the enemies of democracy), to win new hearts for the cause of peace - these are the big, hard tasks that we, in the Israeli peace movement, have taken upon ourselves to carry out. This newsletter is one of our instruments. We write it to make the world aware of our struggle, and call upon our friends to help us.

The Editor

Note: Because of the editor's being called up for reserve army service (within the borders of Israel) as well as because of several other difficulties, this issue was published a month late. The subscription period will be extended accordingly.

CHRONICLES OF THE PEACE STRUGGLE

This section chronicles the struggle for peace going on in Israel in all its forms: demonstrations, lawsuits, political art, etc. It includes the actions of both regular peace organizations and of non-political individuals and groups, as well as some positions taken by members of the political and military establishment.

The main Israeli peace organizations 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 organization of parents whose sons serve in Lebanon.

ICIPP - The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace - our own organization, which specializes in legitimizing contacts with the PLO.

"Campus" - a Jewish-Arab student movement (see article in this issue).

For a detailed description of these organizations, see "The Other Israel", Nº 1.

The following chronicle covers the period from August 1st to the end of September.

At the beginning of the period covered here, two vigils, started before, continued. One, in front of Mr. Begin's residence in Jerusalem, started on May 3rd. It was organized by a citizens' group which demanded that all Israeli soldiers be brought back from Lebanon. The second was organized by the CSBU, in front of the military government headquarters in Hebron, where Quiriart Arba settlers



were holding a demonstration of their own, demanding stronger measures against the Arab population.

1/8 - Zvi Shuldiner, a founding member of the ICIPP, is jailed for 28 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon. Two other soldiers are also jailed on the same charge.

- Three "Campus" members from the Hebrew University are brought before the university's disciplinary court for their participation in a June 2nd demonstration against former Chief-of-Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan. If convicted, they faced expulsion from the university. However, the court finds them not-guilty. In the sentence, the court declares that the right-wing students and the university security guards were the ones who started using violence against the "Campus" demonstrators.

2/8 - An article in "Yediot Aharonot" says: There is an unprecedented freeze in the sales of land to private investors in the Judea and Samaria settlements. Many investors are trying to get rid of the plots of land they had bought". This is a direct result of the discovery of fraud in these sales.

- A "Parents Against Silence" delegation meets with education minister Zvulun Hammer. Members of the delegation voice their concern, that continued occupation of Lebanon will lead to moral deterioration in Israel.

4/8 - The CSBU agrees to end its vigil in Hebron on the condition that the settlers stop their own provocative, anti-Arab demonstration. After some bitter arguments among various factions of the settlers, they agree. While leaving Hebron, the CSBU demonstrators distribute leaflets in Hebrew and Arabic, declaring they will continue the struggle against the settlers.

- A public meeting is held in Tel-Aviv, under the auspices of "Amnesty International", to discuss political murder in various countries, particularly in Latin America. Likud M.K. Dror Zeigerman calls upon the government to stop selling arms to Argentina until its government stops violating human rights and reveals the fate of the "disappeared" persons, many of whom are Jews. (Zeigerman is one of few true liberals in the so-called "Liberal" party, most of whose members support discriminatory and racist laws and policies).

- A two-week voluntary work-camp closes in Jaffa. The work-camp, whose participants included Jews and Arabs from Israel as well as volunteers from all over the world, was intended to help the Arab population of Jaffa, which is neglected by the municipality. Despite attempts by the municipality to obstruct it, the camp was a big success.

5/8 - Dozens of women demonstrate in front of the "Neve-Tirtza" women's prison, where Arab prisoners were severely punished after they refused to cook for the guards.

- Robert Benvelgi, a military police sergeant, is released from a twenty-one day term in military prison and is immediately summoned again to serve in Lebanon, starting August 7th. This is a serious escalation in the army's treatment of soldiers who refuse to serve in Lebanon.

6/8 - "Parents Against Silence" hold a

demonstration in Haifa to mark the fourteenth month of the Lebanon War.

- Members of several organizations that oppose the sale of Israeli arms to El-Salvador gather in front of the "King David" hotel in Jerusalem, where a high-level Salvadorian delegation is staying.

7/8 - Members of the CSBU demonstrate in front of the military court in Ramallah to protest the trials of students from Bir-Zeit University (the students were jailed for eighteen months for taking part in protests after the massacre at Hebron University). Soldiers disperse the demonstration brutally, breaking the finger of one woman demonstrator. Several are detained until the evening.

- "Parents Against Silence" demonstrate in front of the prime minister's office during the cabinet meeting. They denounce the government plan to build a new defence line on the Awaly River and demand complete withdrawal from Lebanon. The demonstration is joined by the members of a reserve infantry unit, who just finished a thirty-day tour of duty in Lebanon, during which three of their comrades were killed.

- Robert Benvelgi is again jailed, this time for thirty-five days. He had been singled out for particular harassment because his superiors regarded his double refusal to serve as a guard in Al-Ansar prison camp as a slur on the reputation of the military police. Another soldier is jailed on the same day. He is a military doctor, an invalid of the 1973 Yom-Kippur War.

11/8 - The father of a soldier killed the day before in Lebanon cries out: "Why do they send our soldiers to act as policemen between Christians and Druse? Bring them home!" (This was reported in "Yediot Aharonot").

12/8 - The "Neve-Zedek" theatre features a new play about the Lebanon War. The play, called "Pilots", is about an Israeli pilot who commits suicide by throwing himself and his bomb-laden plane into the sea, rather than bomb Beirut.

14/8 - "Peace Now" puts up posters in all Israel's cities against Jewish settlement in Hebron. The poster shows the ruins of the Hebron market, burned by settlers on July 7th, with the text: "A Jewish quarter in the heart of Hebron means hatred, murder, pogrom, murder... stop it!"

14/8 - 17/8 - Members of "Peace Now's" youth section hold three days of study on the Palestinian problem. Their program includes a meeting with Bethlehem mayor Elias Freij and other Palestinians.

15/8 - Uri Ram, a member of the ICIPP, is jailed for thirty-five days for refusing to serve in Lebanon. At his trial he declares: "I have sworn to defend the State of Israel to the best of my ability, and I remain faithful to that oath. I never swore I would be a mercenary in Begin's empire or in Reagan's, and I don't intend to be one".

17/8 - 21/8 - A voluntary, Jewish-Arab work camp opens in Nazareth. This is the eighth year the camp has operated. From Nazareth the idea has spread to various other places. These work-camps are a way of promoting Jewish-Arab understanding and cooperation. They are also a way of protesting



the government's discriminatory policies in allocating insufficient resources to the Arab sector and of helping the victims of this policy.

18/8 – Ofer Bernzwein, a reserve soldier due to go to Lebanon on August 22nd, starts a four-day hunger strike in front of Mr. Begin's residence. He says he will continue his hunger strike in the army as well.

– At a meeting of mayors from the Negev towns, the participants – some of whom are known as "hawks" – voice sharp criticism of the government's policies. They claim that the allocation of funds to the West Bank settlements is virtually "starving" the Negev towns.

– Reserve paratroopers, due to go to Lebanon for the fourth time since the beginning of the war, demonstrate in front of the defense ministry in Tel-Aviv. They carry a banner reading: "In the past we volunteered – now we are mobilized under protest!"

19/8 – In a newspaper article, author Nathan Zach calls upon the Hebrew Writers Association, which had already called for the return of the soldiers from Lebanon, to explicitly support soldiers who refuse to serve there.

– In another newspaper article, Avraham Ahituv, former director of the Shin-Bet (the Israeli secret service), charges that the Gush-Emunim settlements are "hotbeds of anti-Arab terrorism". This article opens another round of public controversy about the settlements. (According to "Time" magazine, Ahituv had resigned after the government forced him to discontinue the investigation of the 1980 bomb attacks on the mayors of Nablus, Ramallah and Al-Bireh).

– A group of high school students about to be drafted are interviewed on television. Many of them voice their unwillingness to go to Lebanon.

20/8 – Members of "Yesh Gvul" demonstrate in front of Mr. Begin's residence to protest the growing persecution of their comrades by the army authorities, as manifested in the case of Robert Benvelgi. Former prisoners proudly carry placards reading: "I went to prison for refusing to serve in Lebanon".

– Various personalities and organizations make strong protests and call upon Tel-Aviv mayor Shlomo Lahat to fire his campaign manager, Adi Halpern, immediately. Halpern made several extreme racist statements, praising South-Africa's Apartheid system, and adding: "I want to kill all the Arabs, unless they agree to live the way I want them to live".

21/8 – An infantry lieutenant is jailed for 35 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

22/8 – Mayor Shlomo Lahat gives in and sacks Adi Halpern.

– The "Kibbutz Theater" belonging to Mapam's kibbutzim declares it will feature, starting in October, a new play based on the Eli Geva affair. (Col. Eli Geva became famous when he refused to lead his soldiers if given orders to conquer West Beirut).

23/8 – CAWL members hold a rally in Haifa demanding that the government pull out of Lebanon and stop building new settlements in the

occupied territories, thus cutting its budget considerably. They denounce the finance minister's proposal to cut the welfare budget, while leaving the Lebanon and settlements budgets intact.

– A soldier is jailed for refusing to serve in the West Bank.

24/8 – The new student union of Haifa University plans a Jewish-Arab work camp in the Halisa – Tel Amal neighborhood. However, at the last moment the Haifa municipality retracts the permission it had granted for this project. The student leaders say they will begin a public campaign against the municipality's arbitrary action.

25/8 – Ofer Bernzwein is jailed for 35 days for continuing his hunger strike (started on August 18th), contrary to army regulations.

26/8 – Another soldier is jailed for 28 days.

– "Campus" members from Tel-Aviv University visit Bir-Zeit University and meet with its student council.

28/8 – As Mr. Begin declares his intention to resign, Likud members try to organize "spontaneous" demonstrations calling him back. "Peace Now" organizes counter-demonstrations in Tel-Aviv and in front of Mr. Begin's residence, asking Begin why he didn't resign right after the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

29/8 – At 5.30 A.M., several hooligans from among Begin's supporters attack the members of the permanent vigil in front of his residence, and tear up their placards. The demonstrators claim that policemen present did nothing. Moreover – some policemen clearly expressed their sympathy with the attackers.

– In Geneva, the U.N. Conference on the Question of Palestine opens, with the participation of ICIPP, CAWL and Communist Party representatives (see separate article).

– Two paratrooper sergeants are jailed for 35 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

30/8 – An artilleryman is jailed for 28 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

31/8 – "Campus" members demonstrate in front of the defence ministry in Tel-Aviv, protesting further trials of Bir-Zeit students.

1/9 – In a television interview, several soldiers serving in the Lebanese city of Sidon voice their discontent. One of them says: "Every time I go on a patrol, I imagine a foreign army patrolling the streets near my home in Ramat-Aviv (a suburb of Tel-Aviv)".

2/9 – In Geneva, Yassir Arafat meets with the representatives of the ICIPP and the Communist Party.

3/9 – Kibbutzniks from the kibbutzim Barkay and Shomrat demonstrate near the military prison where the soldiers who refused to serve in Lebanon are held. They climb on a mountain overlooking the prison, where the prisoners can see them.

4/9 – "Parents Against Silence" hold their usual monthly demonstration, in front of the prime minister's office, to mark the passing of another month since the start of the Lebanon War. Unexpectedly, the demonstration coincides with the start of the Israeli army's withdrawal to the Awaly River. They use the opportunity to denounce



this move as insufficient and demand complete withdrawal from all Lebanon.

— "Yesh Gvul" members demonstrate in front of Mr. Begin's residence, protesting the tough measures the army had taken against their comrades.

— The organizers of the vigil in front of Mr. Begin's residence decide to terminate it after it had gone on for exactly five months. They declare, however, that they expect the government to withdraw from the rest of Lebanon within the next few months. If the government takes no such steps, they will initiate new forms of protest.

— In a television interview, an Israeli soldier, one of the last to leave the Shuf Mountains, is asked: "How do you feel when you lower the Israeli flag in this territory, which your unit had fought very hard to capture?" To the interviewer's surprise, the soldier answers: "I feel very good. I only hope the flag will soon be lowered in the rest of Lebanon as well".

— In the same television program, Likud M.K. Eliyahu Ben-Elisar, chairman of the Knesset defence and foreign affairs committee, charges that "The government has been forced to give up the strategic Beirut-Damascus highway because of the internal pressure exerted by an irresponsible opposition".

5/9 — "Parents Against Silence" hold a demonstration in Tel-Aviv in front of the defence ministry.

— The Supreme Court hears a lawsuit started by a right-wing activist against the ICIPP (see separate article).

— The leadership of the "Hashomer Hatza'ir" youth movement convenes a meeting of the movement's senior members, the eighteen-nineteen-year-olds who serve as instructors to the younger members, to discuss the question of the increasing incidence of refusal to serve in Lebanon. The leadership takes a vigorous position against refusal, offering to the youth the alternative of "striving to change society while serving meaningfully in the army". The youth themselves are strongly divided, and even those who oppose refusal declare their respect for the refusers, who "fight for their principles". In the end, the meeting breaks up without adopting the leadership's proposal or any other, except for deciding to continue discussions on the subject.

9/9 — "Sifriat Poalim" ("Worker's Library"), the publishing house of Mapam, prints a new book of songs about the Lebanon War, the latest among several such books printed recently in Israel. Some of the songs in these books were written by Ra'aya Hernick, whose son, Guni Hernick, was killed in the battle of the Beaufort Castle, at the beginning of the war. Ra'aya Hernick had been involved in various anti-war activities.

11/9 — "The Israeli Committee for Solidarity with the Chilean People" holds a demonstration in front of the Chilean Embassy in Tel-Aviv to mark the 10th anniversary of the Chilean coup d'etat, which destroyed Chilean democracy. The demonstrators declare their solidarity with the struggle of the Chilean democratic opposition, and

demand an end to Israeli arms shipments to the Pinochet regime. A few hours later, a public meeting takes place in Jerusalem on the same issues.

— In a newspaper interview, Itzhak Zamir, the attorney-general, reiterates his position that meetings between Israelis and the PLO do not constitute a criminal offence. He says it in response to some right-wing figures, who questioned the legality of the Geneva meeting between Arafat and the ICIPP representatives on September 2nd.

12/9 — During the night, vandals deface the memorial plaque to Emil Grunzweig, which was placed in front of the prime minister's office, the spot where he was murdered in the grenade attack on the "Peace-Now" demonstration. The police, unable to find the murderers, were also unable to prevent this vandalism.

14/9 — "Yesh Gvul" holds a public meeting in Tel-Aviv to discuss the situation of the anti-war struggle after the withdrawal to the Awaly.

15/9 — In the Jerusalem municipality elections, a list is presented whose program calls for a political division of the city, ending Israeli rule in its Arab part, while maintaining freedom of movement between its two sectors. The list, in which various political groups participate, is headed by Ya'akov Arnon, member of the ICIPP.

16/9 — In an article printed in Ha'aretz, Prof. Yeshayahu Leibovitz calls the soldiers who refuse to serve in Lebanon "the true heroes of the war — those who refuse to do evil". Like most of Prof. Leibovitz's articles and speeches, this article sparks a furious controversy in the press.

— A soldier is jailed for 35 days for refusing to go to Lebanon. Right afterwards, he is given a new order to go to Lebanon at the end of his prison term. This is a new manifestation of the army's new, tough policy.

— Elementary school students in Ramat-Aviv (a suburb of Tel-Aviv) compose a political paraphrase to the Jewish prayer book. In reference to the Yom-Kippur custom of asking forgiveness from anybody you wronged during the past year, they write "Sharon must ask all the parents of the soldiers who were killed in Lebanon to forgive him"; "The government should ask forgiveness of soldiers who have to spend Yom Kippur in Lebanon". In response, an extreme right-wing columnist writes: "The leftist traitors are poisoning the minds of our children".

18/9 — On the anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, there is a general strike in Israel's Arab villages and towns. A large rally, organized by the Communist Party, takes place in Nazareth, and demonstrations take place in several other places. In East Jerusalem, big police forces brutally break up a joint Jewish-Arab peaceful demonstration and arrest twenty-three of its participants.

19/9 — The CAWL organizes a memorial meeting in Tel-Aviv for the victims of Sabra and Shatila and the other victims of the Lebanon War. It takes place where the giant demonstration of 400,000 people was held a year ago. No speeches are delivered — the participants stand silently, holding burning candles. An attempt by the fascist Rabbi Kahane to disrupt the meeting is foiled by the



police. On sale in the crowd is a new book, analyzing the Kahan Commission's report. The book reaches the conclusion that the commission did not go deep enough and let Sharon, Begin and the rest enjoy the benefit of doubt far too much.

20/9 – Judge Dov Eitan announces his resignation from the Jerusalem District Court. In 1979, after the Chief-of-Staff, Gen. Rafael Eitan pardoned several soldiers who had murdered Arabs, Judge Dov Eitan (the two Eitans are not relatives) asked the army to relieve him of service as a judge in military courts during his reserve military service. He wrote that he is incapable of sending soldiers to prison for slight breaches of discipline while murderers go free. This did not become public knowledge, and thus his career at the District Court was not impaired. However, in 1983 Judge Eitan became a controversial figure after publicly joining the “Yesh Gvul” movement. He was criticized publicly by the justice minister and privately by fellow judges, and anonymous threats were made on his life. Finally, his position became untenable, and he had to resign.

– In a Jerusalem rally, Ariel Sharon attacks the communication media, calling them “traitors, servants of the PLO”. A wave of protests follows this expression, which is clearly intended to pave the way to curtailing the freedom of speech. The Jerusalem Association of Journalists declares it will boycott Sharon's public appearances until he retracts his words. Meanwhile, it is revealed that an anti-Sharon demonstrator, who was present at the rally, was assaulted and mistreated by policemen who claimed to be “protecting” him.

21/9 – The “Yesh Gvul” movement appeals to the Supreme Court against the National Parks Authority, which had banned a concert in the national park at Achziv, near the Lebanese border. The concert is planned for September 28th, and many of Israel's most popular singers have volunteered to take part in it without payment. A large part of them have never before taken a public position on political matters.

– The Jerusalem Association of Journalists decides to cancel its decision to boycott Sharon's public appearances, because Sharon and his supporters have used it to make him seem an innocent victim, whose right to speech is being denied. However, the Association's spokesman declares the journalists will seek other ways of responding to Sharon's incitement, which, he claims, is making it dangerous for journalists to do their job.

23/9 – The Jerusalem police declares they have appointed an investigating officer to look into the behavior of policemen towards an anti-Sharon demonstrator during the inflammatory rally of September 20th.

24/9 – The National Parks Authority, after finding it has no chance of winning in the Supreme Court, removes its objection to the “Yesh Gvul” concert in Achziv national park, on condition that no political speeches are delivered. “Yesh Gvul” replies that the event's program did not include speeches in the first place, but that this does not

imply any acceptance of the anti-democratic restriction imposed by the National Parks Authority.

– Five hundred refugees from Bir'am village in the Galilee, who were expelled in 1948, hold a rally at the ruins of the village. The occasion is the 30th anniversary of the destruction of the village houses to prevent the return of their inhabitants.

25/9 – Among the productions featured in the Acre theatre festival (a festival devoted to young authors and new theatre groups) is a new play about the Lebanon War. The heroes are members of a tank crew who capture an Arab woman in Lebanon, and their arguments reflect the internal conflict of Israeli society as a whole. The author, Igal Ezrati, has been active in various anti-war protest actions.

25-27/9 – In preparation for the concert, “Yesh Gvul” members conduct wide-spread activities on the streets of Israeli cities, distributing leaflets and selling tickets.

– “Netivot Shalom” (“Peace Roads”) – a moderate religious group opposed to “Gush Emunim” – builds a “Peace Tabernacle” in Jerusalem. There they hold several symposiums and other peace activities.

26/9 – Six of the “Peace Now” leaders meet with defence minister Arens and voice their concern over the continued Israeli presence in South Lebanon, which might turn into a permanent occupation. They also call upon him to stop Jewish settlement within Hebron, and protest the actions of the Israeli official acting as “mayor” of Hebron, who cancelled an appeal against the settlers presented to the Supreme Court by the dissolved Arab municipality. They present him with new evidence about the July 7th burning of the Hebron market by the settlers, evidence which was not acted upon by the Hebron police and military government.

– Pliah Albeck, the justice ministry's senior legal expert in charge of finding new land for settlements in the West Bank, presents a report showing that confiscating enough land for a Jewish quarter in the middle of Hebron is impossible on legal grounds. It should, however, be noted that in similar cases in the past the Israeli government changed the law to make the confiscation legal.

– In Amsterdam, a meeting takes place between the “Peace Now” support organizations of ten European countries to coordinate and increase their activities.

26 - 28/9 – Some right-wing elements attempt to sabotage the “Yesh Gvul” concert, using several methods. In an article printed in the right-wing daily “Ma'ariv”, columnist Yosef Ahimeir calls upon popular singer Hava Alberstein to cancel her participation. In a direct and brutal threat, the Likud youth section sends a telegram to the director-general of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority, demanding that he ban the “Yesh Gvul” artists from appearing in radio or television programs. There are also rumors of various economic pressures being brought to bear on some of the artists. In reply, singer Shlomo Artzy writes an article of his own in “Ma'ariv”. Artzy, who holds



centrist, middle-of-the-road political views, declares he himself does not support "Yesh Gvul" and has refused to participate in the concert, but he vigorously defends the democratic right of his fellow artists to act according to their convictions.

28/9 — Several families of Argentinian "disappeared" apply to the Supreme Court for an order nisi against the government, demanding that it take action to find out the fate of their relatives. This is the first time that the government policy of supporting third world dictatorships is challenged in this way.

— At the Achziv national park, a crowd estimated at 20,000 turns out for the "Yesh Gvul" concert — far more than the organizers expected. A moment of silence, in memory of the Lebanon War victims and of Emil Grunzweig, who died for peace, is followed by many hours of performance by Israel's foremost singers and groups, all of them appearing without payment. Singer Hava Alberstein gets particularly strong cheers, for appearing despite many threats and pressures. A sum of about three million Israeli shekels (roughly \$ 50,000) is collected in admittance fees, as well as from the sale of "Yesh Gvul" posters, buttons, etc. The money will go to finance a special fund that will support the families of imprisoned soldiers who have refused to serve in Lebanon.

It should be noted that not all those who attended the concert were "Yesh Gvul" supporters. Many of them came from the nearby Galilee towns of Nahariya and Shlomi. Many of these, predominantly Oriental Jews, are long-time Likud supporters and, because they have suffered PLO raids and bombardments, are particularly susceptible to government propaganda about "Operation Peace for Galilee". Of course, nobody expected that they would be converted to "Yesh Gvul" views in one night. Nevertheless, "Yesh Gvul" regards the fact that it got a hearing from thousands of people who were previously utterly hostile to the peace movement as one of the concert's most important achievements.

30/9 — The police officially ask "Peace Now" to help in the investigation of the July 7th burning of the Hebron market. The evidence collected by "Peace Now" includes the names of settlers who used their weapons (issued by the army) to intimidate soldiers who tried to stop them; who obstructed the Hebron municipality's fire squad to prevent it from putting out the fire; and who came later the same night to Hebron military headquarters, trying to intimidate the police and army into stopping the investigation. "Peace Now" brought this evidence, backed by several eyewitness reports, directly to the defence minister, and also published it widely, making it difficult for the authorities to quietly terminate the investigation, as they usually do in such cases.

The ICIPP delegation at the Geneva Conference

Like the other organizations of the Israeli peace movement, the ICIPP received an invitation to the U.N. Conference on the Question of Palestine, which opened in Geneva on August 29th. The ICIPP has held several long discussions concerning this invitation. It was known that the present situation within the PLO is complex and difficult, and that the conference might turn into a political trap. Nevertheless, the ICIPP decided to take the risk, which was considered outweighed by the chance to resume the contacts between the ICIPP and PLO leadership, disrupted by the assassination of Dr. Sartawi and by the Fatah "muṭiny" and other forms of Syrian pressure on the PLO.

The ICIPP delegation consisted of Dr. Matti Peled, Uri Avnery, Amnon Zichroni and Dr. Noami Kies. Besides the invitation to the ICIPP as an organization, Avnery and Peled were invited individually as "eminent personalities". The only other Israeli organizations who participated in the conference were the CAWL and the Communist Party (through its front organizations). Several other organizations and personalities, notably "Peace Now" and M.K. Yossi Sarid, turned the invitation down. Thus, unfortunately, a whole section of the Israeli peace camp was not represented in Geneva. This undoubtedly reduced the impact that the Israeli peace movement could have had in the conference, had all its sections participated.

From the start, the Israeli and U.S. governments used all possible means to sabotage the conference. American pressure on the French government succeeded in removing the conference from Paris to Geneva. The Swiss government did its best to discredit the conference, surrounding it with large armed forces and taking "security measures" far beyond those necessary to counter any possible threat. This was done, apparently, to create the image of a "conference of terrorists". The media in many western countries either strongly attacked the conference or simply failed to report its existence.

Despite this, the conference was impressive. Although under American pressure some West European nations reduced their delegations to observer status, all U.N. members were present except Israel and the United States. In addition to the 157 governments represented, there were present more than a hundred non-governmental organizations, whose representatives delivered some of the most interesting and original speeches.

The ten days of the conference revealed, clearly and unmistakably, the existence of a virtually world-wide consensus in favor of Israeli-Palestinian peace and in favor of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, side-by-side with Israel. The only exceptions to this consensus are the Israeli and American governments on one side, and a handful of extremist states, such as Libya and Iran, on the other. The existence of this consensus was



apparent not only in the positions taken by West European delegations, but also by those of the Third World delegations as well. For example, the foreign minister of Malaysia, a Muslim country with an anti-Israeli reputation, delivered a pointedly moderate speech, and took various discreet measures to make his position widely known.

Moreover, even many apparently extremist speeches were, in fact, not so extreme. An important example is the speech by Syrian foreign minister Abd Al-Halim Hadam. Though Hadam's message was couched in most extreme terms, the kernel of it implied Syrian acceptance of Israel in its pre-'67 borders, and showed that Syria does not share the positions of its allies, Iran and Libya, who demand the destruction of Israel. (States who have no common border with Israel can afford the luxury of such declarations. In any case, while the Iranian delegate heatedly rejected "any form of negotiations with the Zionist entity" everybody in his audience knew that Iran is one of the major customers of the Israeli arms industry.)

The ICIPP delegation used the conference to renew many old ties and create new ones, with both governmental and non-governmental delegates. However, it was most concerned about relations with the PLO delegation. These had gone through several complex ups and downs, which confused those in Israel who tried to follow the reports from Geneva. One of the main difficulties arose from the composition of the PLO delegation. It was headed by Faruk Kadumi, the PLO "foreign minister", and Yasir Abd-Rabo. Both belong to the pro-Syrian wing of the PLO. Though the Syrian attempt to depose Arafat through the Fatah "mutiny" failed, some measure of cooperation with Siria is vital to the PLO. Kadumi and Abd-Rabo regard the achievement of rapprochement between the PLO and Syria as their first priority. Thus, they pointedly ignored the ICIPP delegation. Other members of the PLO delegation did meet with the ICIPP — but only privately. In these meetings, some of them frankly voiced their fear of meeting Sartawi's fate.

On the first day of the conference, Abd-Rabo read a "message of greetings" from Arafat, (later it turned out that Kadumi and Abd-Rabo had written the document on the spot, without consulting Arafat.) The positions presented in it were extreme: it did not mention peace at all, calling for "the use of force to regain what was taken by force". It also accused Israel of bearing sole responsibility for the Sabra and Shatila massacres, without mentioning the large demonstrations in Israel after these massacres. As a patriotic Israeli delegation, the ICIPP members decided to immediately publish a communiqué expressing "deep disappointment". This communiqué became an immediate sensation.

Two days later, the ICIPP members were agreeably surprised to hear Kadumi's speech, in which he took a clear pro-peace position. In the speech, Kadumi declared that the PLO originally supported the creation of a "democratic-secular state" in all Palestine, but after the Jews rejected this idea, the PLO decided to support a national Palestinian state in a *part* of Palestine. Kadumi also

mentioned the PLO's support for the American-Soviet joint statement of October '77, and for the Brezhnev peace plan of March '81, which explicitly mentioned Israel's right to peace and security. Kadumi also mentioned that "even in the Zionist camp there are voices critical of Begin's policies". This distinction between different kinds of Zionism is unprecedented for Kadumi, who has until now stuck to the position that Zionism of any kind is racism. The whole speech was very moderate. Had Sartawi been alive, he couldn't have said more.

The discrepancy between the two speeches stems, apparently, from the fact the "message of greetings" was written on the spot by Kadumi and Abd-Rabo, while Kadumi's speech was carefully planned several weeks in advance with the participation of many PLO leaders.

Despite his praise for the Zionist peace camp, Kadumi continued to ignore the ICIPP Zionists present in Geneva. This led to the "cocktail party incident".

Like many other delegations, the PLO delegation held a cocktail party, sending official invitations, with the PLO emblem in gold at the top. No such invitation was sent to the ICIPP delegation. When it turned out that Arafat, who came unexpectedly to Geneva, would be present at the party, it became doubly important. Nevertheless, the ICIPP, as an official representative of the Israeli peace camp, decided it would not attend the party without receiving an official invitation, and rejected an offer, passed through a third party, to come without an invitation. Later, it turned out that Arafat had demanded that an invitation be issued to the ICIPP, but his order was not carried out.

Later the same night, Imad Shakur, Arafat's aide, called Avnery at his hotel room, and a series of meetings took place at once, between midnight and 4.00 A.M., making arrangements for the morning.

In the morning, Arafat delivered his speech to the conference. It was a moderate speech, reiterating the PLO's support for the Fez peace plan and for the American-Soviet joint statement of '77, as well as for the Egyptian-French 1982 draft resolution to the U.N. security council. This resolution, blocked by the threat of an American veto, called for a mutual and simultaneous recognition between Israel and the PLO. Arafat also called for an international peace-conference, under U.N. auspices, with the participation of all the interested Middle-Eastern parties as well as both superpowers.

The most moving part of the speech was near its end. Suddenly Arafat turned directly towards Avnery and Peled, who were in the audience, and said: "I am taking this opportunity to point out the Jewish progressive democratic forces, inside and outside Israel, who rejected the war, who rejected the invasion, who rejected Sabra and Shatila, who rejected the expansionist policy, who support the rights of our people. Let us fulfill, together, the vision of peace in the Land of Peace, and give it as a present to the whole world!"

After the speech, Arafat met with Uri Avnery



and Matti Peled. Tufik Tuby and Felicia Langer of the Communist Party also took part. Due to the public character of the meeting (many delegates and diplomats from various countries were present), it was impossible to hold a serious discussion, aside from a brief mention of the Israeli POW's held by the PLO and the missing Israeli soldiers. However, the meeting's importance lay in the very fact that it took place. Arafat undoubtedly knew, when he decided to attend this meeting, that the Fatah "rebels" would accuse him of "treason" — as their leader, Abu-Saleh, did within hours, in Libya. The meeting was a demonstration by Arafat; a statement that he is not afraid, that he will continue on the road to peace.

This meeting was the ICIPP's most outstanding achievement in Geneva. The presence of the ICIPP delegation had other effects, some of them less visible: dozens of ministers and diplomats from all over the world came to know more about the Israeli peace movement and its problems. The ICIPP members gave dozens of interviews to the world media. After Amnon Zichroni circulated among the delegates a memorandum on the legal situation in the occupied territories, he was invited to lecture on the same subject before the International Society of International Law in Boston. Also, the notes prepared by the ICIPP and distributed to the various delegations (see below) had some effect on the final resolutions of the conference. These were moderate in tone, completely confounding the Israeli ambassador, Ovadia Sofer, who had conducted a vigorous campaign against the conference, predicting it would call for the destruction of Israel. (It should be noted that in the committee which prepared the resolutions, Faruk Kadumi supported the moderate position.)

In the final balance, it seems that, despite several "incidents", the ICIPP's participation in Geneva was justified.

The following are excerpts from the speeches delivered by Uri Avnery and Matti Peled, and from the notes presented by the ICIPP to the various delegations towards the close of the conference. The full text of these documents is available at P.O.B. 956, Tel-Aviv.

*Address of Major General (Res)
Mattiyaahu Peled, Chairman of the
Israeli Council for
Israeli-Palestinian Peace,
2 September, 1983.*

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

(. . .) I need hardly tell you that your conference is probably one of the most controversial ever convened by the UN. The Israeli government considers it as an affront to itself and denounced it as soon as it was proposed, and was supported in this, as in many other issues, by the USA. (. . .) Even important groups of the peace forces in Israel took exception to it. (. . .) My own evaluation of this conference was quite different. (. . .) THE ICIPP

decided to send a delegation to participate in the conference. (. . .) one of our reasons was that for a long time we have been maintaining that the problems of the Middle East, and especially the Palestinian problem, have to be dealt with by the United Nations. (. . .) I consider it as one of the most unfortunate developments in the recent history of the Middle East that due to narrow-minded considerations, the United States brought an end to the Geneva Peace Conference and has assumed sole responsibility for the peace process. Since then the situation in the Middle East is constantly deteriorating. Rather than search for a comprehensive peace, in cooperation with the Soviet Union and with the active participation of all the parties involved, the USA preferred a series of bilateral negotiations conducted under its supervision. Apart from leading the Middle East from one crisis into another, this procedure enabled both Israel and the USA to ignore the Palestinian problem in an effort to work out a *pax americana* in which the Palestinian people would have no place. The futility of this effort is now all too obvious. (. . .) This conference certainly cannot revive the Geneva Peace Conference, but I believe that it can help in drawing the attention of the world to the need of handing over the responsibility for the peace process in the Middle East to the UN.

(here a major portion of Dr. Peled's address had been omitted, as it is essentially parallel to the other material presented here).

(. . .) What I found disturbing in the course of the conference was the lack of explicit realization that the struggle for peace is indivisible, and is being carried out on all sides simultaneously. Many addressed themselves to the atrocious massacres in Sabra and Shatila. I do not deny that Israel is directly responsible for this crime. But there are two facts which come to mind the moment this crime is mentioned and which were ignored until this morning. The one is that the Lebanese Falange participated in the killing and the other is that the largest demonstration protesting against the Israeli government on account of this crime was held in Israel. I am deeply grateful to Chairman Arafat for having acknowledged in such an open-hearted manner the role of the peace forces in Israel on that occasion, but I cannot help wondering what the silence over these two important fact during the conference up to this point has signified. (. . .) Let me bring another example. A great deal has been said here about Israel's presence in Lebanon. I believe that Israel should pull out of Lebanon immediately and unconditionally. Many other Israelis take the same position. Young Israelis, in increasing numbers, prefer to go to jail rather than participate in an unjust war and fight the Palestinians, whose rights we so haughtily deny. But the Israeli army is not the only one that is fighting the Palestinians, yet we do not hear of soldiers serving in other armies choosing to go to prison rather than fight the Palestinians. (. . .) We could see many more Israeli soldiers refusing service in Lebanon, if only they could be persuaded that peace with a Palestinian state was possible. (. . .) I am



convinced that the future well-being of Israel is tied to the future well-being of the Palestinian people, and this is the reason, one of the reasons, I came here.

Statement by Mr. Uri Avnery, former Member of the Knesset, Co-Chairman of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, 5. September 1983

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.

(...) Let me first submit my identity card: I am an Israeli. I consider myself a patriotic Israeli. (...) As an Israeli patriot, I believe that the future and security of my country depends on peace. I believe that there can be no peace in our region without the Palestinians. I believe that there can be no peace with the Palestinians without recognizing the PLO. I therefore believe that Israel and the PLO must recognize each other, and that direct contact between our two peoples is a pre-condition to any peace. (...) I want to live in the national state of my people with our own flag, our own passport and the right to choose our own government, good, bad or very bad. I believe the Palestinians have the right to live in a national state of their own, under their own flag and with their own passport, and have the right to choose their own government, hopefully good.

(...) Mr. Chairman, Where do we stand now? (...) while we are sitting here in this meeting on this sunny September afternoon in Geneva, the bulldozers are working in the West Bank, new settlements spring up. (...) I am addressing you with a desperate sense of urgency. (...) What can be done? Economic sanctions? They won't help, they will only make the Israelis rally behind an even more extreme government. Military action? Israel has unquestioned military superiority. A change in the attitude of the USA? One has to be a very optimistic optimist to believe in that. Condemn? Protest? (...) I do believe that there is one point, and one point only, where this vicious circle can be broken, and that is Israeli public opinion. (...) Israel is a democracy. He who changes public opinion in Israel changes government policy, indeed, changes the government itself. (...) What is Israeli public opinion? Let me try to describe it in very schematic, even simplistic, terms. (...) There is one minority in Israel which believes that the West Bank and Gaza should remain forever in Israeli hands, even if the price is eternal war. (...) Nothing will change this outlook of the people who govern Israel today. (...) On the other side, you have another minority, smaller and less powerful, but important and significant, which sincerely believes in peace. This is the part of Israel which demonstrated after the terrible massacre in Sabra and Shatila. (...) Between these two minorities, there is the great majority of the Israeli people, who waiver between the two extremes. Why do they rally behind the Government of Begin/Shamir? (...) For a very simple reason. They have been brought to believe that peace is impossible. That even if you give back

the West Bank and Gaza, and even if the Palestinian state comes into being, there will be no peace, no solution, no security. Rather, the new Palestinian state will become a base for attack on Israel, 25 km. from my home on the seashore of Tel-Aviv. (...) Unfortunately, there is no lack of Palestinian and Arab statements which can be used to strengthen these fears, such as the Palestinian Charter; statements saying that the creation of a Palestinian State is only a first step towards another, altogether different solution, etc. (...) We have to convince the Israeli public that this solution – namely the creation of a Palestinian national state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with its capital in East Jerusalem, living side by side with the state of Israel in its pre-1967 borders, with its capital in West Jerusalem – is the final settlement of the problem, the basis for a permanent peace, a peace for generations. (...) What we need are deeds, gestures, that ordinary people can see and hear and be impressed by.

(...) One week before the visit of President Sadat to the Knesset, 110 out of 120 members objected to giving back the Sinai. One dramatic gesture, which shook Israeli public opinion to its very depths, was enough to change an impossibility to a political fact.

This then is the value of the dialogue. An open and public dialogue between patriotic Israeli peace forces and the PLO is an absolute necessity, because it will show people that Israelis and Palestinians can talk with each other, that enemies can become friends, that there is a real possibility for co-existence in our country. (...) Of course, courage is needed. Indeed, there is no more dangerous profession in the Middle East than the profession of peacemaking. Let me remember here the great Palestinian patriot and peacemaker, Said Hamami, with whom I opened the dialogue in 1974. He was assassinated by Arab extremists. Let me remember that most remarkable human being and Palestinian leader, Issam Sartawi, my friend, my brother, murdered by Arab gunmen this year. Let me also mention Emil Grunzweig, an Israeli peace activist, murdered in Jerusalem by a hand grenade thrown by Jewish terrorists at a peace demonstration. (...) In the battle for peace we, the peace forces in Israel and the Palestinian peace forces, are the frontline soldiers. Like Winston Churchill we say: Give us the tools and we shall do the job.

(...) Nearly a hundred years ago, the founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, wrote in his diary, after the first Zionist Congress, which was held not far from here, in Basle, Switzerland: "In Basle I founded the Jewish State." Let this great conference conduct its business and draft its resolutions in such a manner that it will be said in the future: "In Geneva there was founded the Palestinian State".

The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace – Notes Relating to the Proposed Resolutions of the Conference on the Question of Palestine



(...) As the conference is preparing its final resolutions we, the ICIPP, would like to submit to the delegates the following remarks:

(...) We feel that it is of the highest importance to formulate the resolutions in a language that will enhance the efforts made by us in Israel to win over public opinion. (...) The decision of the ICIPP to participate in this conference was met with strong opposition by the government, mass media, the major political parties, and even by some groups inside the peace camp in Israel. A carefully balanced formulation of the resolutions will prove all the fears reflected in this opposition wrong and justify the participation of the ICIPP in the Conference.

(...) The ICIPP was formed in December 1975 with the purpose, among others, to encourage the dialogue between Israel and the PLO and thus educate public opinion to accept a just solution to the Palestinian problem. (...) Since its inception, the ICIPP has conducted a continuous dialogue with authorized representatives of the PLO. (...) The continuation of the dialogue is vital in order to persuade Israeli public opinion that a just solution of the conflict is possible and that the withdrawal from the occupied territories does not constitute a danger to Israel's existence. Such a dialogue constitutes negotiations between peoples, which pave the way to an eventual negotiation between governments.

(...) We strongly urge the delegates to bear in mind that a great many Israelis who are supporting the cause of peace and who have participated in the struggle for peace in Israel consider themselves Zionists. Their brand of Zionism is diametrically opposed to that professed by the Israeli government and many chauvinistic circles in Israel. The fact that being a Zionist is not in itself an indication of blind nationalism has been recognized by distinguished speakers in this conference.

(...) In the light of all this we would like to urge the delegates to consider incorporating in the final resolutions the following ideas:

a. That the principle of the right of the Palestinian people for self determination and to a state of its own and the principle that Israel is entitled to a secure and peaceful existence should be considered inseparable.

b. That the settlement of the conflict, once achieved on the basis of these two principles, should be final and irrevocable except by mutual consent.

c. That the borders between the two states will correspond to those which were in effect prior to June 5th, 1967.

d. That this solution should reflect the principles of international legality and morality. Therefore, no such evasive formulas as "the rights of all states" should be used and the states aimed at should be named specifically, just as the late president Brezhnev did in his proposals regarding peace in the Middle East.

e. That the status of Jerusalem be recognized not as proposed in the draft, but in accordance with the principles that West Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and East Jerusalem will be the capital of the Palestinian state; that the two capitals will constitute one city, under a common municipal

organization; and that the Holy Places will be administered by their respective religious institutions.

f. That the mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestinian state will be announced simultaneously.

g. That until that historic event takes place, the UN should provide the framework for the "negotiations between the peoples" as explained in this document.

OTHER ICIPP ACTIVITIES

As always, the ICIPP followed current events in Israel and the Middle East, and its members protested various abuses, using the medium of press communiqués, paid ads in the newspapers and letters and telegrams to ministers. Several times ICIPP members denounced Ariel Sharon, who has been building an extreme right-wing following for himself with statements ranging from "the media serve the PLO" to "the territory of Jordan is also part of Eretz-Israel; it is ours". The ICIPP urged broad public action against Sharon and his followers.

In August, two members of the ICIPP, Zvi Shuldiner and Uri Ram, refused to serve in Lebanon during their reserve military service, and were sent to jail. The ICIPP sought to publish, as a paid ad, its resolution expressing solidarity with its jailed members. Surprisingly, three newspapers, including the liberal "Ha'aretz", refused to print it, out of fear of being prosecuted for "inciting soldiers to mutiny". In the end, the ad was published only in "Al-Hamishmar", the newspaper of Mapam (The Labor Party's junior, more left-wing partner). This incident, coupled with the silence of the Jewish press about attacks on the freedom of the Arab press (see separate article) give rise to some concern about the future of the freedom of the press in Israel.

The ICIPP has also been involved in a lawsuit before the Supreme Court. It started last year, after Matti Peled's and Dr. Sartawi's joint press conference in Paris, during the siege of Beirut. Yedidia Be'ery, an advocate and right-wing activist (he is a member of the so-called "Liberal" party, but his views are the very opposite of liberal) petitioned the Supreme Court for an order nisi against the attorney-general, to make him explain why he would not prosecute Matti Peled for treason (the only capital offence on the Israeli lawbooks, except for the law against Nazi war criminals) because of his participation in that press conference.

The hearing of the case was fixed for September 5th, 1983. Amnon Zichroni cut short his participation in the Geneva Conference to return to Israel to appear before the Supreme Court. Renato Yarak, the attorney-general's representative, claimed that the court should not interfere with the attorney-general's discretion to decide whom to prosecute. Zichroni, as Matti Peled's attorney, supported this argument, but also addressed the legal and political question on its own merits. He brought dozens of precedents, both from Israel and



from other countries, to show that Peled's actions do not constitute a criminal offence; citing, among others, Jane Fonda's visit to Hanoi during the Vietnam War and Ramsey Clark's trip to Teheran, during the embassy hostage crisis. Zichroni also fully described the changes which took place in the PLO during the last years, and that organization's willingness to negotiate with Israel. An amusing interchange occurred when Be'eri claimed that the ICIPP's activities were "dangerous to state security". Zichroni answered: "On the same grounds, you can also demand that the Supreme Court President, Itzhak Kahan, be prosecuted for heading the Kahan Commission on the Sabra and Shatila massacres!" (Justice Kahan was presiding over the hearing).

This attracted public attention once again over the question of negotiations with the PLO. The ICIPP is now waiting for the Supreme Court's verdict.

Is there freedom of the press in Jerusalem?

The following is the text of a statement put out by the Arab Journalists' League in the Occupied Territories, on August 18th, 1983. We reprint it here, because we consider it important that its contents be widely known.

We wish in this statement to draw your attention to the growing dangers which threaten the existence and functioning of the Palestinian press in the Occupied Arab Territories.

On August 16th 1983, the Israeli authorities issued a ruling by virtue of the Emergency British Mandatory Regulations of 1945 cancelling the licence of the bi-weekly Palestinian magazine "Ash-Shira" which is based in Jerusalem.

This ruling means the cancellation of the existence of the magazine. It is considered a dangerous attack on the most basic principles of freedom, a brutal assault on the freedom of speech. It means, moreover, a threat to the rest of the Palestinian newspapers, magazines and bulletins, since they will face the same fate if they are faithful to their people's problems. It also represents a menace to the journalist profession which already faces many obstacles from the Israeli authorities. On an immediate level, this ruling means that dozens of Palestinian journalists are being deprived of their jobs and prohibited from working.

This step comes to complete a chain of measures designed to gag the Palestinian press. There is a strict Israeli military censorship of Palestinian newspapers and magazines, which makes it impossible for them to function professionally. Orders forbid the distribution of some papers and magazines in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a slow death for these publications. Apart from this, there are further restrictions on individual journalists,

detention, town arrest*, and rulings prohibiting them from covering certain events.

We would like to point out here that "Ash-Shira" used to conform strictly to the orders of the Censor. For this reason, the decision to close it down was based entirely on the arbitrary Emergency Regulations which give the authorities the right to close down a magazine or newspaper without giving any reason. We consider all these steps part of a systematic Israeli policy of oppression against the Palestinian people and our legitimate rights.

We appeal to our colleagues, who consider freedom of speech and the functioning of the journalist profession a cause of concern, and to all organizations interested in human rights.

We ask our colleagues all over the world to declare solidarity with Palestinian journalists and the Palestinian press. Your support and solidarity will be very dear to us and a very useful element in our fight to defend our profession.

The Arab Journalists' League in the Occupied Territories

The following are excerpts from the Emergency Regulations which were invoked in closing down "Ash-Shira" magazine:

THE DEFENCE (EMERGENCY) REGULATIONS, 1945, Article 94:

- 1) No newspaper shall be printed or published unless the proprietor thereof shall have obtained a permit under the hand of the District Commissioner of the District in which the newspaper is being, or is to be, printed.
- 2) The District Commissioner, in his discretion and without assigning any reason therefore, may grant or refuse any such permit and may attach conditions thereto and may at any time suspend or revoke any such permit or vary or delete any conditions attached to the permit or attach new conditions thereto.
- 3) Any person who contravenes this regulation or the conditions of any permit thereunder and the proprietor and editor of the newspaper in relation to which the contravention occurs shall be guilty of an offence against these Regulations.

* Town arrest is an order confining a person to his or her town or village for half a year, without trial and without any charges being brought. When the half-year is over, the authorities can issue a new order and continue this process as long as they want. (Footnote by "The Other Israel")



On August 23rd, the day on which the Arab East Jerusalem press held a one day protest strike, Uri Avnery sent the following letter to Mr. Yosef Burg, the Israeli Minister of the Interior.

Mr. Interior Minister:

I am writing you this letter to protest an act of grave injustice, committed by the Jerusalem District Commissioner, your subordinate . . .

(Here, a section of Avnery's letter has been omitted, as it repeats the facts enumerated in the Arab journalists' statement.)

As an Israeli who believes in Israeli-Palestinian peace, I strongly protest this latest act of repression against the population of the occupied territories. (East Jerusalem is still an occupied territory, sixteen years after its formal annexation — and your very act is one more proof of this.)

As an Israeli believing in democracy and freedom of the press, as an editor myself of a weekly magazine which can legally be closed at the whim of your officials, I can not tolerate this anti-democratic action. The fact that today you choose to act only against the Arab press does not reassure me in the least.

In 1945, the British colonial administration enacted these so-called "Defence Regulations" in an effort to crush the Jewish struggle for national independence. They failed completely. The State of Israel had chosen, in 1948, to retain these regulations — an act of infamy, for which you, a minister in almost all of Israel's governments, bear a large share of the responsibility. For thirty-five years you and your partners in various governments have used these regulations to make Israel's Arabs into second-class citizens, and to crush the national aspirations of the occupied territories' population. You will fail, just like the British originators of these regulations failed.

I and my colleagues will never rest until the last of these infamous regulations are removed from Israel's lawbooks, and until Israel has a constitution making any such anti-democratic legislation null and void.

Uri Avnery

We regret to note that most of the Jewish press in Israel, including the liberal newspaper "Ha'aretz" and the Labor Alignment's two newspapers, took no action in this matter. It seems that the editors of these newspapers are reassured by the fact that so far, only the Arab press has been attacked.

prominent role in several lawsuits of a political nature. He represented Arab landowners whose land was confiscated for Jewish settlement, and the leaders of the 1982 general strike in the Golan Druse villages, whom he succeeded in freeing from "administrative detention" (arrest without trial). Recently, he represented Palestinian prisoners held in Al-Ansar prison camp in southern Lebanon.

The following account of the legal system prevalent in the occupied territories is based on an interview given by Avigdor Feldman to the weekly "Koteret Rashit" ("Headline"):

In the first years after 1967, the dominant doctrine was that of the so-called "Liberal Occupation", and the authorities' declared aim was "to better the population's living conditions, economically and legally". Many labor and welfare laws were introduced into the occupied territories in those years. But of this policy, basically insincere as it may have been, nothing remains today.

The basic aim of Israel's present legal policy in the occupied territories is to take land from Arabs and transfer it to Jews, and to make the territories' population totally dependent on the military authorities.

The legal situation in respect to the settlements has changed several times. By international law, an occupying power can confiscate land only for "defense purposes". Therefore, the first wave of settlements, established under the Labor government, were described as "defense settlements" (this outworn cliché is still current in Labor party propaganda). The "defense" pretence was stripped away in the famous "Alon-Moreh" lawsuit, in which Zichroni and Feldman, together with lawyer Elias Huri, played a leading part. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that there was no military necessity for building the "Alon-Moreh" settlement, and that confiscating land for purely civilian purposes was illegal. The government was forced to remove the settlement.

Faced with this threat to its basic policies, the Israeli government had to find another legal way of confiscating land. After a strenuous search through the lawbooks, the government's senior legal team came up with a forgotten Ottoman law, still on the books though it hasn't been enforced for many years. According to this Ottoman law, any land that is not being cultivated, and which is "beyond shouting range" from the closest village or town, is the Sultan's property. The Israeli government, considering itself heir to the Sultan, is claiming all such lands, which constitute sixty per cent of the West Bank. Thus, the government can claim it is confiscating nothing, but merely taking back its own property.

This is still a violation of international law, according to which an occupying power must maintain public lands as a reserve for the local population. In the West Bank, Israel is declaring lands to be "public" for the very purpose of taking them away from the population. Of course, the government claims the Israeli settlers are "the local population". . .

The occupation authorities make a

The abuse of law in the Occupied Territories

Avigdor Feldman is a 36 year-old Israeli lawyer, working with Amnon Zichroni. Although not connected with any particular political organization, he has played, in recent years, a



sophisticated use of the many systems of law in force in the occupied territories: Ottoman, British and Jordanian, in addition to the Israeli occupation's own decrees, of which about 1,200 exist. For example, while the Jordanian constitution, still in force on the West Bank, forbids the expulsion of citizens, the British emergency regulations of 1945, which were never formally repealed by Jordan, provide for such expulsions. To justify expulsions, such as those of the mayors of Hebron and Halhul, Kawasma and Milham, the Israeli legal experts created a brand-new constitutional theory, according to which, if the emergency regulations contradict the constitution, the constitution is not valid. . .

In the military occupation's own decrees, there is a marked tendency to create a dual legal system, with different laws for the Israeli settlers and for the Arab population. For example, the "Local Councils Decree" of 1981 affects only the Israeli settlers' local councils and gives them all the powers given to municipalities within Israel. On the other hand, several other decrees stripped the Arab municipalities of many of their powers. Thus, the Arab municipalities' power to confiscate land was transferred to an Israeli-controlled "central planning committee". Other powers were taken from the municipalities and transferred to the military occupation's "Civilian Administration", or to its quisling "Village Leagues". A similar action was taken towards the Arab courts, which have jurisdiction over civilian affairs in the West Bank. In May 1983, the inhabitants of the West Bank village Bidia obtained an injunction from the Nablus Court, against settlers who occupied their land, using a fraudulent "sale" as their pretext. The military authorities and the settlers refused to honor this injunction, and opened fire on the villagers who tried to stop the construction work being done on their land, killing one. The whole affair caused the government a lot of public embarrassment. The government's answer was a new decree, stripping the Arab courts of their power to rule on land ownership disputes, if the land is unregistered (About seventy per cent of the West Bank lands are unregistered.) This power was transferred to a new "arbitration committee" composed of three Israeli officials.

When called as a defense witness, in the trial of officers accused of mistreating the population of Halhul, the (then) Chief of Staff, Rafael Eitan, stated that there was a deliberate policy of using the powers of the "Civilian Administration", such as licence bureaus, control of foreign travel, etc., as a means of harassment and intimidation.

These powers, already great, were vastly increased recently by two new decrees, numbered 1015 and 1039. According to Decree 1015, planting a fruit tree requires a written permit from the military government. Existing trees must be reported within 90 days, and a permit for each of them obtained. Special government inspectors have the power to make searches and uproot unlicensed trees, and the owners of such trees are liable to as much as a one-year imprisonment. Decree 1039 makes the same demands regarding the growing of

vegetables. West Bank agriculture had gotten along quite well for sixteen years without such regulation. The only reason for its introduction must be political — to give the government another means of punishing "trouble makers" and rewarding collaborators.

Gen. Eitan's testimony also disclosed another means used for "legal" harassment. These are the wide powers of detention wielded by army officers in the occupied territories. While inside Israel, the police can detain a citizen for only 48 hours without bringing him before a judge, in the occupied territories an army officer can detain a person for 30 days, and in many cases the victim is re-detained a day or two after being released.

Gen. Eitan openly admitted that this is not done for any particular investigation, but solely for purposes of intimidation. In an Israeli civilian court, such an admission would have been enough for the judge to immediately order the prisoner's release and severely reprimand the police. However, in the Halhul trial, the military court ruled that harassment and intimidation were legitimate methods of "keeping order", as long as the letter of the law was observed!

Another abuse concerns the trials of minors. In the occupied territories, it is quite common to bring twelve year-old children before a military court and try them without a lawyer. In most cases, the child remains silent and uncomprehending, while he or she is being sentenced to heavy fines, the non-payment of which will entail imprisonment for the child's parents. (This is done, in many cases, without the parents knowing at all that the trial is taking place!) Recently, when Felman appealed one such case, the state gave up the case rather than have the whole procedure come under the scrutiny of the Supreme Court. However, in many of these cases the children and their parents are unaware of their right to appeal, or unable to exercise it.

Avigdor Feldman is very worried about the future. The legal standards of the occupied territories are slowly contaminating Israel's own legal system. This is most evident in the military courts, but even the Supreme Court, regarded by many as the last bastion of human rights in Israel, is far from immune. For example, several months ago the Supreme Court ruled the imposition of V.A.T. in the occupied territories legal, despite the Hague Convention which forbids an occupying power from imposing new taxes. This the Supreme Court justified by claiming the Hague Convention was meant for "a short occupation" lasting a few months, while "a long occupation", lasting sixteen years and continuing indefinitely, creates "a new situation". This verdict, of course, creates an ominous precedent, threatening the complete erosion of the rights guaranteed to the population of the occupied territories under international law.

In conclusion, though legal battles play an important part, the ultimate solution is not legal but political: an end to the occupation.



Comment

After Begin: The Big Questions

Note: two terms used in this article should not be confused:

Herut ("Liberty") – Begin's own party, founded in 1948 as a political continuation of his anti-British underground organization.

Likud ("Unity") – The block, formed in 1965 between "Herut" and the Liberal Party (originally called **Gahal**: "Herut" – Liberal Block), and extended in 1973 to include several other organizations.

Barring some totally unexpected development, it seems that the political career of Menachem Begin is indeed over. Mr. Begin, described as "a broken man" by defence minister Arens, has not disclosed the exact reasons for his resignation, and speculation on this subject became, for a time, a central topic for social small-talk in Israel; but author S. Izhar may have been close to the mark when he wrote that: "He resigned because each and every night more than five hundred * shadows haunted his bedroom, standing silently to attention, staring, staring at him. . ."

Interesting as the problem of the man Menachem Begin may be, the really important question is the fate of the political forces, whose personification Begin had long been.

Begin had combined in his person two distinct roles: Begin the orator, the demagogue, the rabble-rouser; and Begin the politician, the party-leader, the prime-minister. Perhaps the most important question of post-Begin Israeli politics is: will the right-wing, annexationist forces be able to produce another leader who combines these characteristics, and thus retain the support of the Oriental ("Sephardi") Jews, who form a majority of Israel's population.

Though most of the Oriental political leaders are more moderate than their European ("Ashkenazi") counterparts, and though the hard-core fanatical groups like "Gush Emunim" are almost purely European, the Orientals as a mass have been Begin's main base of support, and without them he could never have come to power or implemented his policies.

Begin had gained this support by long and patient labor, lasting more than thirty years. In the fifties, Begin's "Herut" party was small and seemed doomed to remain on the political fringe. Though a legal party, under Ben-Gurion its members suffered social ostracism, and most of them were barred from holding government jobs. Ironically, this very treatment caused the Oriental immigrants, who arrived in Israel in these years, to regard Begin as the anti-establishment leader *par excellence*. The effect of this was not immediately apparent. The original

immigrants, who were uprooted from their traditional way of life in the Arab and Muslim countries and thrust abruptly into a modern, industrial society felt helpless, confused and completely dependent on government support. Most of them venerated Ben-Gurion, the personification of the all-powerful government on which they were dependent. It was the second generation, those who were born in Israel or who came as children, that rebelled against the Labor establishment that had placed their parents in the slums and the so-called "Development Towns";**and who turned, in growing numbers, to the alternative offered by Begin.

Begin's great achievement as an orator has been to blend the social frustrations of his audience with his own aggressive nationalism, and thus to channel their resentments outwards, against the Arabs, giving them pride and a sense of belonging by letting them take part in a national crusade.

Begin had successfully continued these tactics after becoming a prime minister. A good example is the violent election campaign of '81, where Begin combined jingoism and open threats against Syria with appeals to Oriental communal feeling. The same is true of the July '82 pro-war rally in Tel-Aviv, to which Begin successfully drew a crowd estimated at near a quarter-million. At last, however, the masses seem to have deserted Begin: when some of this followers tried to organise "spontaneous" demonstrations calling him back, the turnout ranged between a few dozen to three hundred at the most. This, however, may well be but a temporary eclipse. These same masses may shortly transfer their loyalty to a new leader, a new "King of Israel",***who might be tougher and more unscrupulous than Begin. Two claimants for this doubtful honor have already emerged out of the Lebanon War: Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan. Both have been active in recent months, each touring the towns and villages of Israel and building up his following. While Eitan seems to form the nucleus of a new party, which shows openly fascist characteristics, Sharon concentrates his efforts on trying to capture the existing Likud coalition. He has already shown some of his strength in the election of Begin's successor by Herut's nine-hundred member central council. In that

** The "Development Towns" were built, in the fifties, in Israel's outlying regions, under a government policy intended to counter concentration of the population in the big cities. Many of these towns remain artificial creations, even after thirty years of existence. With an economy dependent on one or two big factories, such towns suffer from chronic unemployment and offer very limited prospects to their young generation.

*** One of the popular expressions of Begin-adoration is a song whose words are "Long live Begin, King of Israel". The followers of other leaders, such as Ariel Sharon, use to insert their leader's name into the song.

* The number of Israeli soldiers killed in Lebanon.



election, Sharon's supporters were decisive in helping Itzhak Shamir defeat David Levy, though at present Sharon hasn't got enough support to get elected himself.

The two contestants in that election were representative of the two social and ideological elements that came together in the Herut party: Itzhak Shamir, the former underground leader, representative of the old guard, the veteran of the anti-British underground; and Moroccan-born David Levy, former construction worker and a resident of the "Development Town" Beit-She'an. David Levy can by no means be described as a "dove" - as minister of housing, he played a big part in building the West Bank settlements; nevertheless, there are some indications that this was done for political expediency more than because of deep ideological commitment, such as Begin's or Shamir's; also, during the Lebanon War, Levy had taken relatively moderate positions (he was the only minister who voiced misgivings about allowing Christian militiamen into the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps before the massacres).

Though Levy lost the contest with Shamir, he did show considerable strength, winning more than 40% of the votes. It should also be noted that many of Levy's supporters are the elected representatives of Herut branches, who reflect to some extent the mood at the grassroots, while Shamir gained much of his support from party veterans, who were appointed to the central council directly by Begin. The election had not been conducted, however, on purely communal lines: many Orientals voted for Shamir, while some of Levy's chief aides were Europeans.

Even after Shamir's election, the situation remains in flux. Shamir doesn't have Begin's authority or charisma. Within 'Herut', many regard him as a stop-gap candidate. Levy is still waiting for a second chance, and others, like Sharon and defence minister Arens, are waiting in the wings. Shamir has yet to face the many fickle coalition partners who caused Begin a lot of trouble; also, many of the Likud voters have felt loyalty towards Begin personally, rather than towards the Herut party or the Likud block. Until the next general elections take place, there is no way of knowing with any certainty how many of them will go on supporting the Likud without Begin. Most probably, many of them don't know it yet themselves.

Meanwhile, over the past few years there has arisen a new intellectual elite among the Oriental Jews of Israel. Some of them joined "Tamy" ("Israeli Traditional Movement"), the Oriental party formed by Aharon Abu-Hazeira in 1981, which won three seats in the Knesset and is part of the coalition, while others identify with no existing party. Many of these intellectuals are "doves". Some of them realise that Arab-hatred is also a denial of their own cultural heritage, which is inextricably interwoven with Arab culture. Some of them, at Haifa University, have begun cooperating with the

Arab students. Others have held two demonstrations against the Lebanon War, and later started a peace movement of their own, which is demanding that Israel stop being a Western outpost and become a true part of the Orient. So far, these groups are a tiny minority within the Oriental community. Perhaps the disappearance of Begin's charismatic personality might give them a better chance.

Most probably, the resignation of Begin heralds a period of greater political instability and struggle. It is yet to be seen if the final outcome will be for better or for worse.



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Lebanon: The Crumbling House of Cards

Like Israel's entry into Lebanon, her withdrawal – very partial, for the time being – was accompanied by a lot of bloodshed. By breaking in, the Israeli army overturned the delicate balance which had resulted from stalemate in the Lebanese civil war of 1975-78. Fired by grand imperial dreams, Ariel Sharon tried to impose the Falange, a minority within Lebanon's Maronite minority, as the rulers of the country. From the start, it was obvious that this is a house of cards which will crumble the moment Israeli bayonets cease to support it. And so it came to pass, except that in real life, tragically, the "cards" were heavy, crushing beneath them many innocent people. Only one part of the "house of cards" is still standing – the part which is supported by American, French, British and Italian bayonets. It doesn't seem to be fated to last much longer, either.

Israel seems to have abandoned the imperial dream of making Bashir (or Amin) Juma'el the ruler of all Lebanon, and has left the Americans to salvage what they can from its ruins. However, a smaller, less pretentious – but no less fallacious or dangerous – version of this dream is still very much alive. That is the dream of imposing the rule of the Christian major Sa'ed Hadad and his militias (which are virtually Israeli auxiliaries) over all South Lebanon, with its big Muslim Shiite population, with its big Muslim cities of Tyre and Sidon (this Shiite population, very militant and well armed and organized, has quite different plans for its future). This dream is shared by both of Israel's big parties (Shimon Peres was the man who created the Hadad militias in the first place, during his term as defence minister in the Labor cabinet). It is to be hoped that when this dream also crumbles – as it must – there will be less bloodshed. And it is also to be hoped, though it is by no means certain, that the Lebanese fiasco will teach Israel to refrain, in the future, from further imperial ventures.

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