



The Other Israel

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INTRODUCTION

At the time these lines are being written, the Israeli government has finally started to grapple with the difficult decision on what to do in Lebanon. The government had been very reluctant to face this moment. For months, it had prolonged the farce called "The Nakura Negotiations", in which Israel consistently demanded a Lebanese approval for its continued presence in South Lebanon and the Syrian-backed Lebanese government just as consistently refused. This, despite the fact that practically everybody in Israel knew that the talks were pointless.

The government acted in this way because it knew that immediately on breaking off the negotiations, it would be faced with a very difficult choice.

The situation of a continuing bloodletting in an endless guerilla war to no purpose was almost untenable, politically if not militarily. A complete withdrawal to the international border meant an open admission that the whole war had been useless and meaningless. The possible "compromise solution" – a partial withdrawal to a more southerly line – was no solution at all, but merely a shifting of the battle zones a few kilometers to the south, accompanied by a new waste of money on a new line of fortifications.

The decision taken on January 14th is not yet

the final one. Though the principle of withdrawal to the international border was accepted, no precise timetable was fixed beyond the first stage – the withdrawal from the Sidon area, which is due to take place at the second half of February. Implementing the final stages of the withdrawal will require a new government decision. Moreover, the government resolution explicitly states that, even after the supposed final stage of the withdrawal, there will remain in South Lebanon a zone of unspecified dimensions in which "local forces will operate with the backing of the Israeli Defense Forces". Therefore, the role of the anti-war movement is far from over – pressure on the government must be kept up until the last Israeli soldier departs from the blood-soaked soil of Lebanon.

* * *

For a young Israeli, hearing about the coming of the Ethiopian Jews to Israel was like being thrust, for a moment, into a time machine, back to the great immigration wave of the early 1950's. That, indeed, was one of the main aspects which the Israeli media caught on and soon repeated ad nauseam.

The new aliyah (immigration) did not, however, cause in Israel an euphoria of resurgent

Fahd Kawasmeh – a martyr for peace

On the last day of 1984, the body of Fahd Kawasmeh – the exiled mayor of Hebron and a newly elected member of the PLO Executive Committee – was buried in the Amman cemetery, near the grave of Dr. Issam Sartawi. That is no mere coincidence, for both Sartawi and Kawasmeh have died as martyrs for the same cause – the cause of Israeli-Palestinian peace; and both were condemned by the Israeli government to remain perpetual exiles – in death as well as in life.

A great number of Israelis have known Kawasmeh personally. During the long struggle against the encroachments by Israeli settlers in Hebron, many peace activists had the occasion to meet Kawasmeh and cooperate with him; and those who attended the meeting in West Jerusalem that he addressed, a short time before his deportation, still recall his proud bearing as well as his sensible words. These ties were not broken by the deportation. (Haim Bar'am of the ICIPP had conducted a lecture tour in the U.S., with Kawasmeh and his fellow-exile, Muhamed Milham of Halhul.) Fahd Kawasmeh had good reasons to hate the State of Israel, whose soldiers had torn him from his home in the middle of the night and sent him across the border with a sack over his head; but exile did not turn Kawasmeh into an embittered man, full of blind hatred. On the contrary: in exile, as before, Kawasmeh was a proponent of Israel-Palestinian peace, and his election to the PLO executive committee was a visible symbol of the victory of the peace line in the PLO. That is why the assassins have singled him out as their victim.

Little did Kawasmeh's many Israeli friends guess that the greetings he had sent to them from Amman, via the Israeli journalist Amnon Kapeliuk, would turn out to be final farewells from a man soon doomed to die so tragically. Many, both Palestinians and Israelis, will long mourn the loss and honor the memory of Fahd Kawasmeh, a Palestinian patriot and a martyr for peace.



Zionism. Quite the reverse, in fact: as the politicians started bickering bitterly about the responsibility for disclosing the matter prematurely, it became clear that the Israel to which the Ethiopians come is a disillusioned Israel, an Israel deeply divided against itself, and an Israel in which unemployment and racism spread like a twin cancer. In this Israel, the new, black-skinned immigrants are by no means universally welcome. With newspaper articles creating a stereotyped image of "primitive savages" needing to be "civilised" (one of the methods proposed for "civilising" them is to send them to the West Bank settlements!); with the mayors of several towns mouthing the clichés about "The ingathering of The Exiles", but stridently demanding that these particular "exiles" be "ingathered" in some other town; with the religious establishment regarding them as "not quite Jews" or "only 95 percent Jews" and requiring them to undergo a humiliating "ritual conversion to Judaism" and (for the males) a "symbolic circumcision" (though, being observant Jews, they all are already circumcised) – given all these, it is not at all inconceivable that the Ethiopian Jews will become, within a short time, the newest of the underprivileged, discriminated-against groups in Israeli society.

An ample historical precedent exists in the fate of the Oriental Jews, whose trauma at the treatment they received during the 1950's had been passed on to the second, Israeli-born generation. Progressive Israelis must do all in their power to prevent such a tragedy, and to extend a welcoming hand to these people, who were rescued from starvation in Ethiopia, only to become pawns in a strange and complicated power struggle in Israel.

Chronicles of the peace struggle

The following chronicle covers the period from November, 1984, to the beginning of January, 1985. Due to lack of space, it was necessary to be more selective than previously, and several events had to be omitted. In particular, parliamentary events were mostly omitted from this chronicle, which is primarily devoted to extra-parliamentary activities.

During the period covered, "Peace Now" seemed to be, it last, emerging from its paralysed condition. The "Peace Now" communiqués assumed a tone far more critical of the government than previously (See issue No. 11, p.4; entry for October 8th); and after some hesitations "Peace Now" joined a demonstration by "Parents Against Silence" (See below, entry for January 7th). Nevertheless, it is not clear if "Peace Now" is ready to launch a full-scale campaign against the Peres government, as it did against the Begin government.

The demonstration at Ixal village (see below, entry for December 18th) also marks a significant precedent for "Peace Now", which since its establishment has maintained an exclusively Jewish character. At Ixal, for the first time, the "Peace Now" banner flew above a joint Jewish-Arab demonstration. Further developments within "Peace Now" may be crucial for the future of the peace struggle in Israel.

27/11 – A poll conducted by Ba'mahane ("In Camp"), the Israeli army's official organ, found that 17 percent of the new draftees support the soldiers who refuse to serve in Lebanon.

– In a letter to the defense minister, women from the Golan Heights settlements complained that the continuing service of their husbands in Lebanon is disrupting their lives. The letter was written after several Golan settlers were killed or wounded in Lebanon, within a short period. This protest, coming as it does from people whose political orientation permits them to settle in occupied Syrian territory, is an indication of the breadth of opposition to the Lebanon War.

28/11 – A meeting on "Israel and the Palestinians" took place in Villeurbanne, France. It was organized by the Lyon-Villeurbanne branch of the "Comite Palestine et Israel Vivront".

1/12 – Large army and police forces used violence and tear gas to disperse a demonstration at Dheisheh Refugee Camp, organized by the Israeli Bir-Zeit Solidarity Committee. About 30 Israeli demonstrators were detained at the Bethlehem police station till late at night.

2/12 – Eli Gozanski was the first soldier imprisoned for refusal to serve in Lebanon. Immediately after the outbreak of the war, he served three consecutive prison terms on this charge. Now, after a long period in which the army authorities respected his refusal, he was again ordered to serve in Lebanon and jailed for 14 days.

4-6/12 – Two more soldiers were jailed, for 14 and 21 days respectively, for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

7/12 – An Israeli army officer serving in Lebanon used a radio program, in which soldiers can send greetings to their families, to say: "To Arik in New York, greetings from the suckers you have sent to Lebanon!" (The reference is to Ariel ("Arik") Sharon's libel suit against Time Magazine in New York). As the program was broadcast live, the controllers at the Israeli army's radio station were unable to stop him.

15/12 – Members of "Yesh Gvul" climbed the mountain overlooking the military prison where their comrades are held and called out their names. Inside the prison, the demonstration caused a near-mutiny, and Max Bloch – a Lebanon refuser serving his third consecutive term – was placed in solitary confinement for flying a red flag on a tent.

– Members of "Parents Against Silence" and the Labor-affiliated youth movements held vigils at important crossroads throughout Israel. In the evening, rallies took place in four cities, addressed by Labor "doves" who called for immediate withdrawal from Lebanon.

18/12 – Several dozen "Herut" members ("Herut" is the dominant party in the Likud block) came to the Arab village Ixal, home of Labor M.K. Darawsha, to demonstrate against Darawsha's attempt to go to Amman and address the Palestinian National Council (see issue No. 11, p. 1). They were met by thousands of Jewish and Arab counter-demonstrators, including most of the village population and members of "Peace Now" and of the Labor Party. Despite the fact that the



counter-demonstration was non-violent, the police carried out arrests among the village population.

— At a demonstration of unemployed workers in Yeruham, a Negev town hit hard by the economic crisis, the demand for a complete stop to the West Bank settlements was voiced.

19/12 — M.K.'s Shulamit Aloni, Yossi Sarid and Mordechai Bar-On of the CRM visited Dheisheh Refugee Camp and were warmly accepted by the inhabitants. A disagreement appeared, however, over the CRM position that the refugees should refrain unilaterally from stone-throwing, while occupation and settlement continue. Also, the CRM M.K.'s decided, not very sensibly, to talk with Rabbi Levinger (who had been holding a sit-in strike at Dheisheh, demanding the deportation of the inhabitants) and "try to convince him" — instead of pointedly ignoring Levinger, as other visitors to Dheisheh did.

25/12 — By a majority of 58 against 36, the Knesset decided to strip Meir Kahane of the right to unlimited freedom of movement, which is ordinarily part of parliamentary immunity; thus enabling the police to prevent him from entering Arab villages and towns. The police did use this authorisation a day later, when Kahane tried to enter Taibeh village. It should be noted, however, that the 36 pro-Kahane votes (plus several M.K.'s, including all the Likud leaders, who absented themselves in order not to vote against him) are an ominous sign for the future.

27/12 — In Tel-Aviv the trial of poet Yitzhak La'or started. La'or, who is well-known in Israel for his controversial political songs (*see issue No. 2, p.3; entry for July 15th, 1983*), was prosecuted for taking part in the first demonstration against the Lebanon War. (That demonstration, on June 8th, 1982, was violently broken up by right-wing thugs and police plainclothesmen). The main prosecution witness, a police officer notorious for his extreme right-wing views, claimed La'or had assaulted him during the demonstration, a complete inversion of the truth.

30/12 — Prof. Dany Amit, head of the physics department of Jerusalem University, was jailed for 14 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon. His imprisonment caused a stir in Israeli academic circles, as well as many international protests from such organizations as the French "Comite Palestine et Israel vivront". On close dates, several more reserve soldiers were jailed, bringing the total to five. Notable among them was the radical playwright Smuel Ha'spary, a deeply religious man whose brand of Judaism is far different than the religious establishment's.

3/1 — The reserve soldier Max Bloch won his struggle with the army authorities. After he was jailed three consecutive times for refusal to serve in Lebanon, the commander of the army north command personally ordered his unit to desist from trying to send him to Lebanon.

7/1 — Several thousand people took part in a demonstration by "Parents Against Silence" and "Peace Now" at the Knesset, demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon, a formulation used for the first time by these novements.

The PLP in the Knesset

In recent months, a growing number of Israelis are becoming victims of the economic crisis. A large part of the PLP's time and efforts have been spent in raising the problem of unemployed workers and others threatened with unemployment, particularly in the so called "development towns" (actually, these are severely undeveloped towns, where unemployment is endemic). Another aspect of the same crisis is the financial collapse of most municipalities in Israel, which are unable to pay their workers (the Arab municipalities, whose condition is precarious even in better times, suffer the worst); still another aspect are the brutal cuts in the budgets of the social, educational and health services.

In particular, the PLP raised the problem of the deteriorating condition of the premature babies' wards in the Israeli hospitals. A sum of about \$ 6000 is necessary to nurse a premature baby and bring it to health. Because this budget was cut, hundreds of premature babies either die or become crippled for life, while the cost of a day's occupation in Lebanon could have saved them.

Similarly, when opposing the government's decision to abolish state-paid kindergartens for 3-4 years old children, Matti Peled pointed out that the sum of 56 million dollars a year, which the government intends to save by taking this step, is equivalent to the cost of 56 days' occupation in South Lebanon, or to a similar number of days of developing the "Lavi" fighter aircraft.

The "Lavi" ("Lion") is the showcase project of the Israeli military - industrial complex. In the considered opinion of Matti Peled (and of many other military experts, not all of them "doves") this huge expenditure is completely unnecessary, even on purely military grounds — to say nothing of economic and political ones.

During the visit of Prime Minister Peres to France, the possibility of purchasing two French nuclear reactors was raised. Since then, the issue of nuclear power has, for the first time, entered Israeli politics. Along with other opposition M.K.'s, Matti Peled opposed the French reactors. He raised the question of the great expenditure involved in building the reactors, the ecological problems, and especially the political-military aspects, such as Israel's refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Arms Treaty, and its policy of maintaining an Israeli nuclear monopoly in the Middle East, manifested in the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981.

Since the nuclear debate, more public interest has also been shown in "ordinary" ecological hazards created by various polluting industries. One case which combines ecological and political aspects is an Israeli-owned stone quarry located 50 meters from the Dheisheh Refugee Camp, whose operation creates constant dust clouds which endanger the health of the refugees. Dheisheh continues to be a "hot spot" requiring constant attention, and the PLP raised such issues as the violent dispersal of a peace demonstration at Dheisheh (*see chronicles, November 18th*) while permission was granted to avowed supporters of the anti-Arab terrorist



underground to hold a large provocative demonstration in the same place.

On January 1st, Matti Peled visited Dheisheh, along with M.K.'s Muhammad Watad of Mapam and Abd-El-Wahab Darawsha of the Labor Party.

Naomi Kies of the ICIPP visited Fahd Kawasmeh's family in Hebron, immediately after his assassination, and the PLP called upon Defense Minister Rabin to permit Kawasmeh's burial in his home town.

Rabin has sent a reply in writing, in which he wrote that the Kawasmeh family was told to contact the Jordanian Government and "the leader of the PLO" and tell them that the body would be allowed to be interred in Hebron in return for information about Israeli soldiers missing in Lebanon. This is the first time Rabin and the government have, in any way, recognised Yassir Arafat. Rabin added in his letter that the offer still stands.

On January 10th, Adam Keller, the editor of The Other Israel participated as a guest in the fourth commencement of An-Najah University in Nablus, along with other Israelis, such as Willi Gafni of New Outlook, and representatives of the Israeli media. This is the first year in which Israelis had been invited to this event. Their presence in the impressive ceremony, which bore a marked Palestinian nationalist character, is a good omen for the widening of Israeli-Palestinian channels of communications.

In defending the rights of Israel's Arab citizens, the PLP uncovered a shocking scandal concerning the Negev Beduins. The Beduin population had, for several years, been plagued by land-mines planted near their homes. Several Beduins were killed or wounded by these mines. The Minister of Police, Haim Bar-Lev, officially admitted, in a most astonishing letter to M.K. Matti Peled, that some of the mines were planted by the Israeli army, "in order to test the reliability of the Beduins" (*Sic*). Thus, a part of the dark machinations, which have been conducted for many years in order to drive the Beduins off their lands, is now revealed to the public eye. Further ramifications of this affair can be expected.

The treatment of prisoners, both Arabs and Jews, has also been a recurrent theme in the PLP's activity. The PLP M.K.'s have visited prisons in both Israel and the occupied territories, and raised several cases of police brutality and mistreatment of prisoners.

The PLP support for a neutralist Israeli foreign policy was expressed in its opposition to the December joint U.S.-Israeli naval manoeuvres, and to the erection in Israel of relay stations for American anti-Soviet radio broadcasts. (Obviously, the PLP's opposition to Israeli dependence on the U.S. does not, in any way, imply a desire to exchange it for a similar dependence on the Soviet Union.)

The previous issue mentioned the PLP's exposure of Israeli involvement in the Philippines (*p. 7*). All that Brigadier (Res.) Dov Tamari had to say for himself was that his group of Israeli senior reserve officers is not training the Marcos Regime's police, but the "private" security guards of large

farms in the Philippines – which makes absolutely no difference, as the "official" police and the "private" guards are all parts of the same machine of oppression, which is directed against the Philippine people. The PLP will continue its struggle for the immediate cessation of this activity.

The PLP was involved in a great controversy, concerning the delegation of the Green Party of West Germany to the Middle East. This delegation, which visited Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Israel, was subjected – even before it left Germany – to an unprecedented smear campaign, orchestrated by the Israeli Foreign Ministry. By the use of distortions and outright lies, the "Greens" were depicted as anti-Semites, neo-Nazi, "terrorists" etc. The PLP strongly denounced this ugly campaign. The "Greens" visited the Knesset as the guests of the PLP faction and were conducted by PLP executive council members Avi Gleserman and Uri Avnery. During the visit to the Knesset Plenum, the ultra-right wing Tehiyah Party M.K.'s, especially Rafael Eitan (the former Chief-of-Staff) and Geulah Cohen, made an ugly demonstration against the guests on the Knesset floor, and came to blows with the Communist M.K. Tufik Tuby, who defended the "Greens". Sadly, most of the "doves" who had previously shown an interest in meeting the "Greens" were intimidated by the anti-Green campaign and backed out, including all the CRM M.K.'s. Of Mapam, only Muhammad Watad, and of the Labor "doves", only Abd-El-Wahab Darawsha and Ora Namir, dared to meet them.

Less controversial visitors to Israel were the members of a delegation of the Italian Communist Party. When meeting with the PLP, the Italian Communists were surprised to discover that their position of support for the convening of the Palestinian National Council by Arafat was closer to the PLP position than to that of Rakah – the Israeli Communist Party, which adheres closely to the Soviet line.

Another Italian contact was a telegram sent by the PLP to the Italian Prime Minister, Bettino Craxi, congratulating him on his meeting with Yassir Arafat.

Last but not at all least, it should be mentioned that the existence of the PLP might be again threatened in the near future. The justice minister, when asking the Knesset to remove from its agenda two anti-racism bills presented by Mapam and the Communist Party, stated that a government-sponsored anti-racism bill will soon be presented. The catch is that, while the rejected bills were directed against racism and nothing else, the Ministry of Justice is preparing a "balanced" bill directed both against racist parties and against parties and electoral lists considered to "endanger state security"; thus reintroducing the false "symmetry" between the PLP and Kahane's racist list. (*See issue No. 9, p.3-4*)

A more direct threat to the PLP was presented by the extreme right-wing M.K. Yuval Ne'eman, who proposed a bill to outlaw any contact of Israelis with the PLO. This bill was temporarily shelved, but the danger is not over. In the near future, the PLP may need the help and solidarity of its friends, in a great new public campaign.



Intellectual exchanges at Rutgers

"Autonomy And The Other" was the title of a conference held at Rutgers University of New Jersey on November 29th, 1984. The active participants included Palestinian scholars (Edward Said, Elia Zureik, Rashid Khalidi), Israeli scholars (Menahem Peri, Shulamit Volkov, Avishai Margalit, Matti Peled*), and others, among whom should be mentioned the Egyptian pair whose common name-de-plume is Mahmud Hussein, the French philosopher J.F. Lyotard and the Indian Professor of English literature Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The purpose of the conference, as defined by its initiator, Professor Uri Eisenzweig, was "to explore the theoretical implications of concepts which are central to the Israeli-Palestinian debate". Consequently the lectures focused on the literary, historical and philosophical aspects of both the Arab and the Jewish experience in this respect.

The conference was certainly not a political event, but the intellectual exchanges reflected very much the political convictions of the participants. It was quite clear that although the views of the Israelis and the Palestinians reflected the different experiences of the two peoples, this in itself should not be an obstacle to an agreement on practical ways to bring about a solution of the conflict, given the fact that on both sides there is a growing awareness that the deep interest of both peoples lies in establishing a modus of coexistence based on mutual acceptance and recognition.

The PNC 17th session: appraisal

The 17th session of the PNC (Palestinian National Council) in Amman marks an important turning point in the tortuous road towards the realization of the Palestinian goal of establishing an independent state for the Palestinian people. In the session, Yassir Arafat was reelected as chairman of the Executive Committee, with the express intention of allowing him to lead the PLO along the road he had been outlining since the evacuation from Beirut in 1982.

Previous milestones along this road were the Fez Arab Summit, the battle of Tripoli, and Arafat's trip to Cairo after his departure from Tripoli. Defined in terms of practical politics, this symbolic voyage of Arafat from Beirut to Cairo means that both the goal and the means of the Palestinian struggle are now clearly defined. The goal is the implementation of the Palestinian right to self-determination in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, leading to the establishment there of a sovereign Palestinian State. The means is an international peace conference, under the auspices

*Matti Peled was present in his capacity as a scholar of Arabic literature, rather than as a political figure.

of the U.N., with the participation of all parties concerned, including the two superpowers, as well as Israel and the PLO.

All this comes out clearly in Arafat's opening address to the 17th session, and in the final resolution adopted. Some confusion was caused by an impression that Arafat rejected King Hussein's proposal to reach a solution on the basis of Security Council Resolution 242. In fact both Arafat's speech and the final PNC resolutions call for an international peace conference, to be based on all the resolutions of the U.N. relating to the Palestinian problem. There is no rejection here, but also no explicit acceptance of 242. The problem is not new. Since 242 does not admit the existence of a Palestinian national problem, but merely of a refugee problem, the PLO has always refused to recognize that resolution as applying to the Palestinian people. This obstacle has long been recognized, and several efforts have been made to overcome it. As early as October 1977 the U.S. and U.S.S.R. had tried jointly to overcome it in their joint statement, admitting the existence of the Palestinian problem. Unfortunately, the U.S. backed off that declaration only a few weeks after it was announced. Further efforts to modify the language of 242 and insert a reference to the Palestinian problem were consistently opposed by the U.S. The Venice Declaration by the leaders of the European Community, urging the need to admit the involvement of the Palestinian people in the conflict and recognize their role in the peace process, was one such attempt which had been allowed to be forgotten. The Fez resolutions of 1983 were, likewise, ignored by the U.S. and Israel.

Now, in Amman, a fresh attempt was made by King Hussein, when he suggested to the Palestinians to seek peace on the basis of 242. He offered them the choice to do that either jointly with Jordan or on their own. Regarding the guiding principles of the solution, the PNC certainly has accepted the king's proposal, though not mentioning 242 explicitly. Regarding the choice he offered them, no response has yet been made; the executive committee had been given the task to pursue the matter.

It seems clear that the final decision will greatly depend on how receptive Israel would be to the king's ideas. Up till now, the Israeli reaction has been totally negative. It is unlikely that Arafat



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would join King Hussein in another attempt to get the peace process restarted, so long as that attempt seems doomed to be as futile as the previous ones. But the situation is clear: the PLO is ready to join a renewed peace process and no one can claim that Arafat has no clear mandate to support and participate in this process.

Matti Peled

PNC documents

The 17th session of the PNC has obtained a greater measure of attention, all over the world, than any previous session. In many cases, the words spoken and the resolutions adopted were misrepresented or distorted either unintentionally or, in some cases, intentionally (particularly in the Israeli media). In order to properly understand the significance of the PNC deliberations, both the letter and the spirit of the things said must be known. Therefore we bring to our readers some important excerpts of the key speeches delivered at the PNC. The Palestinian leaders' speeches were translated by Yossi Amitai, member of the editorial board, from the PLO's *Filastin-A-Tawra*. King Hussein's speech was translated from the East Jerusalem *Al-Bayader A-Siyassy*. Amitai also wrote the commentaries following each excerpt, mainly intended to clarify the significance of political codewords.

From the speech of King Hussein at the PNC:

... The (present) international situation indicates that the occupied land can be recovered through a Jordanian-Palestinian formula, under which both sides will undertake those obligations which the international community regards as necessary to reach a correct, just and balanced settlement. If you accept this option, (. . .) we will be ready to march together on this road, and face the world with a joint (Palestinian-Jordanian) initiative. However, if you think that the organization (the PLO) is capable of marching alone, we will say: "God bless you", and you will receive from us our full support and assistance; the decision will be yours, from the start to the finish, and we will respect it, whatever it may be, because it will issue from your August Council, which represents the Palestinian People. (. . .) Existing conditions in the Palestinian, Arab and international arenas require adherence to Security Council Resolution 242, as a basis for a just, peaceful settlement. The principle of "The Land in return for The Peace" (*Al-Ard muqabil As-Salam*) is the element to which we will adhere in every initiative with which we will face the world.

This principle is not a precondition, but the framework within which negotiations will take place. Therefore, it is not open to negotiation. The negotiations will take place over the ways and means necessary for implementing this principle, and the obligations each side must undertake; and we regard it as indispensable that these negotiations

should take place in the framework of an International Peace Conference. That conference will take place under U.N. auspices, in the presence of the Security Council Permanent Members * and the other parties to the conflict. The PLO will be present on equal footing with the other parties, being the negotiator concerned with the most important and most serious aspect of the Middle East conflict – the Palestinian aspect.

The question of how Jordanian-Palestinian relations will be organised is the sole responsibility of both peoples – the Jordanian and the Palestinian; and nobody else – neither a foe nor a friend or a brother – has a right to interfere in it, as such interference will be an infringement of Jordanian sovereignty and a criminal interference in the Palestinian People's right to self-determination.

Commentary: King Hussein's speech at the PNC is, essentially, a call for a joint Jordanian-Palestinian initiative, which will have a chance of success by exploiting the existing international and regional conditions. The king felt it necessary, however, to emphasize that he does not dictate anything to the PLO, and that the PLO retains the option of acting alone (through the king left no doubt that he would prefer a joint initiative). Hussein proposed that resolution 242 will be the basis for a peace settlement. On this point Jordan and the PLO remain in disagreement, for till now the PLO has opposed 242, because it does not mention the Palestinian rights. In any case, King Hussein interprets resolution 242 as meaning the principle of "The Land in return for The Peace" (which refutes the interpretations put forward by certain circles in Israel, whose wishful thinking led them to misquoting the king, as if he had talked of "land" without the article, i.e. left the door open for Israel to annex part of the West Bank).

The king insisted that the negotiations must take place within the framework of an International Peace Conference, which is acceptable to the PLO; this also refutes the expectations of those in Israel who hoped that Jordan may join the Camp David Process. The king made it clear that the question of Palestinian-Jordanian relations is subject to the decision of the Jordanians and the Palestinians themselves, and that nobody else has the right to interfere in it (thus, again, disappointing those in Israel who would have liked to see Jordan exclusively representing the Palestinians at future negotiations.)

From Yassir Arafat's speech at the opening of the PNC:

... After our departure from Tripoli, and our wanderings, for the second time, over the sea, and after the grave difficulties which we faced, we got

* Concerning the idea of an international peace conference, an important difference of nuance can be distinguished between this formulation and the proposal mentioning by name the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., thus excluding the three other Permanent Members: Britain, France, and the People's Republic of China.



deep understanding and continuing support from H.M. King Hussein, and from our people in Jordan. Because of this (we have acted) to strengthen these Jordanian-Palestinian relations, as an implementation of our Palestinian National Council's resolution, in its previous session, to create confederal relations between us (and Jordan). (. . .)

Let us struggle together for achieving a just and lasting peace, on the basis of liberating our homeland and the implementation of the inalienable rights of our people: our right to return to our homes and to our property, and our right to found our independent state on our Palestinian land with Jerusalem as its capital; while declaring our adherence to the international resolutions and to international legitimacy, as the basis for any political move.

(. . .) (Such a political move will take place) through an international conference under U.N. auspices, in which all parties will participate. We always regard the resolutions of the Fez Summit as the basis for all our (political) moves, (these resolutions) being the basis accepted by (all) the Arabs.

We declare this clearly, to leave no place for (. . .) any illusions regarding a substitute homeland which is not Palestine. We state this most clearly, so that Sharon, and those who think like him, will understand that we will stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Jordan, and respond to his threats to Jordan by smashing Sharon and his dreams.

(In another part of his speech, Yassir Arafat sent a greeting to "our brothers, the members of the PNC (who live) in the occupied land, and whom the Israeli occupation forces prevented from joining us", and also greeted various friendly elements in the Arab world and elsewhere. A special greeting was directed to "The Jewish democratic and progressive forces, who had stood up against the war and against terrorism and supported our Palestinian national rights").

Commentary: In his speech, Arafat explained the historical and procedural background for strengthening the Palestinian-Jordanian relationship. Significantly, he combined the demand for the full Palestinian rights with accepting "the international resolutions and international legitimacy" on the Palestinian question; he also mentioned the Fez resolutions (1983) and emphasized the fact that these resolutions reflected an Arab consensus.

This means that the PLO is ready to accept the principle of the partition of Palestine into two states who should coexist, and is, implicitly, ready to recognize the existence of Israel, as implied by article 7 of the Fez resolutions. Mentioning the Arab consensus at this point is intended to refute the view that this position goes beyond what is accepted by the Arab world. Arafat saw it necessary to make clear to Jordan (as well as to certain circles in Israel) that he rejects any plan (such as the one imputed to Ariel Sharon) to give the Palestinians a "substitute homeland" in Jordan, while annexing the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Israel.

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From the political report, delivered by Farouk Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Section.

... On the basis of the 1981 U.N. Resolution, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine (took place) in Geneva between August 29th and September 7th, 1983, in order to strengthen recognition of the roots of the Palestinian problem, and finding ways and means that will enable the Palestinian people to implement their legitimate rights. This conference advised the U.N. General Assembly to hold an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under U.N. auspices, on the basis of the U.N. Charter and the various U.N. Resolutions relating to the finding of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Among the important elements (in this conference) is the creation of an Independent Palestinian State in Palestine. (In the conference) there will participate, on an equal footing, all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO, in addition to the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and the other states concerned.

Commentary: This section of the political report emphasizes the adherence of the PLO to international legitimacy in the framework of the U.N. It should be noted that Qaddumi speaks explicitly about "the Arab-Israeli conflict", to which "a comprehensive, just and lasting solution" must be found, thus automatically including Israel among "all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Jewish anti-Semitism in Israel

One of the oldest forms of anti-Semitism, dating back to medieval times, was the accusation of "ritual murder" — that is, that the Jewish religion demands the killing of Gentile boys and the use of their blood for ritual purposes. For many generations, whole Jewish communities lived in constant fear that any disappearance of a Gentile boy would be ascribed to them and lead to new pogroms and persecutions.

It is the cruel irony of history that recently this dark superstition has been exhumed by Jewish racists in the State of Israel, to be used against the Arab minority.

The originator of this phenomenon, which may be termed "Jewish anti-Semitism" seems to be the former Chief-of-Staff of the Israeli army, Rafael Eitan. In March 1982, Israel was shocked by the cruel murder of Nava Elimelech, a 12 year old girl, parts of whose dismembered body were found on the beach south of Tel-Aviv. About a year later, Gen (Res.) Eitan declared, quoting "confidential sources", that the girl was murdered by Arabs "as a ritual of initiation into the PLO". Eitan's allegations were immediately denied by the Israeli police spokesman, and the murder remains unsolved to this day; nevertheless, the anti-Arab libel had been accepted as fact by broad sections of the Israeli public, who assume (quite wrongly) that an army Chief-of-Staff knows what he is talking about.

The issue surfaced again after the murder of Danny Katz, a boy from Haifa, whose body was

found in a cave near the Arab village Sakhnin. Immediately, before any suspect was apprehended, an unidentified "senior police officer" was quoted in Ma'ariv (Israel's most right-wing newspaper) as demanding that Sakhnin and its neighbors, Arabeh and Dir-Hana, be placed under permanent martial law. (See issue No. 4-5, p.15).

In time, five Arab suspects were duly found and prosecuted. The trial is still going on, with the suspects claiming they had confessed under torture. This trial had become the focus of wild anti-Arab incitement, in which a central part was played by Likud M.K. Meir Cohen-Avidov, the Knesset Deputy Speaker, who entered the courtroom and shouted at the suspects: "I want to kill you! I want to gouge out your eyes and spill out your guts!" Later, Cohen-Avidov reiterated these remarks on the Knesset floor, where he proposed to introduce the death penalty for "Arab Murderers", volunteering to act as the hangman himself.*

Surprisingly, Rabbi Meir Kahane was late in entering this particular field, which seems tailor-made for his "talents." When he did enter it, however, he soon outdid his racist rivals by sheer professionalism. Kahane has made it a regular practice to come to the funerals of murder victims, "console" their families and immediately enlist them in his anti-Arab crusade. One such family told a newspaper correspondent: "Kahane is the only politician who cares about us. He really consoled us. A day after the funeral we drove away an Arab worker and an Arab merchant who used to work in our neighborhood. We don't want Arabs here" (Hadashot, 28/8/84). The same family also participated in a violent Kahane demonstration, during which several left-wing and liberal M.K.'s were manhandled and beaten (See issue No. 10, p.4. entry for August 26th.)

The latest case of anti-Arab "blood libel" concerned the case of Hadas Kedmy, a girl soldier who was abducted, raped and murdered. Immediately after the body was found, Ma'ariv (December 12th) again quoted "police sources" as claiming that the murder had "Nationalist motives". ("Nationalism" in this context, meaning, of course, Arab nationalism). So far, nobody had been arrested, but for many people in Israel, the blame has already been fixed on "The Arabs".

Thus, Israel's Arabs find themselves living in the same aura of fear as the Jews in Czarist Russia. In this situation, it becomes the duty of any self-respecting Jew to fight and root out this monstrous outgrowth of Jewish anti-Semitism.

P.S. since this article was written, the police arrested six Arabs in connection with the Hadas Kedmy murder; but a judge released five of them, saying that the evidence presented by the police was insufficient, and only one remains in custody.

* The fact that Cohen-Avidov was the Likud candidate for the speakership of the present Knesset was one of the factors which made the PLP decide to vote for the opposing Labor candidate Shlomo Hillel. Though Hillel won, 43 M.K.'s out of 120 supported Cohen-Avidov, an ominous indication of the power of Israeli racism.