

# The Other Israel

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for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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## INTRODUCTION

In January, the Israeli government declared its intention to withdraw from Lebanon. Many people, both inside and outside Israel, assumed this to mean the end of the war, except for some final winding up.<sup>1</sup> In actuality, the government decision inaugurated one of the bloodiest phases of the whole Lebanon War. This seemingly absurd result is, in fact, quite logical, because the central issue on which the war was, and is, fought – who will rule South Lebanon – has been left unresolved.

In determining its policy, the Israeli government is caught between two opposing pressures. On the one hand, there are the mounting toll of Israeli casualties in Lebanon, and the increasing pressure inside Israel for immediate withdrawal; on the other hand, the government is still far from abandoning completely the Israeli involvement in Lebanon. That involvement, a traditional bi-partisan policy of both Labor and Likud, has its ideological roots back in David Ben-Gurion's time, and its practical implementation started in 1975, with Israeli support for the right-wing Christian militias in Central Lebanon and the creation of the Israeli-controlled mercenary

1. Major (Res.) Benny Gvirtz, killed in Lebanon on April 11th, was a member of "Peace Now". He contemplated refusing to serve in Lebanon, but did not do so because of the government decision on withdrawal.

force in South Lebanon, now known as the "South Lebanon Army". Both these forces are still very much in evidence; both are now jointly conducting the heavy artillery bombardments of the Sidon area Palestinian refugee camps, in which tens of thousands again lost their homes, painstakingly rebuilt after being destroyed during and after the 1982 fighting.

The Israeli government still fully intends to hand over part of South Lebanon to its mercenaries and create a so-called "Security Belt" under de-facto Israeli rule. This causes the continuing and fierce Lebanese resistance. In trying to break this resistance, the government resorts to the "Iron Fist" policy<sup>2</sup> of brutal raids on Lebanese villages, and to such steps as transferring 1,200 Lebanese prisoners to a detention camp inside Israel, in direct contravention of international law. Unless this policy is abandoned, the official Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon will not mean the end of the war, but merely a change of its form: the replacement of Israeli soldiers by Israeli-controlled mercenaries, backed up by Israeli artillery and air force bombardments and by frequent "search and destroy" raids by Israeli ground forces.

Unless Israeli involvement in Lebanon, in all its forms, is completely ended, a new full-scale war will be almost inevitable, sooner or later.

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2. The Hebrew name is "Medinyut Ha-yad Ha-Hazakah" (literally, "The Strong Arm Policy").

### Karim Halaf

For the second consecutive time, it is our sad duty to eulogize a Palestinian leader. On March 30th, a heart attack ended the life of Karim Halaf, the deposed mayor of Ramallah.

Like Fahd Kawameh, Halaf was one of the group of Palestinian nationalist mayors who, after the 1976 municipal elections – the only free elections ever held on the West Bank – have made the municipalities into central organs of Palestinian political life in the occupied territories. As such, Halaf became a prominent target for any plan aimed at breaking Palestinian resistance to Israeli annexation plans. In 1980, he lost his foot in an assassination attempt by the Israeli settlers' terrorist underground; his health was impaired, and his wound required new operations for the rest of his life. In 1982 he was deposed, together with most other mayors, and exiled to Jericho; only after two years was he permitted to return to his hometown.

Throughout, Karim Halaf had maintained constant and growing contacts with the Israeli peace forces. Originally a supporter of Naif Hawatmeh's "Democratic Front", he gradually came to support outspokenly Yassir Arafat's peace line. It should be particularly mentioned that in 1983, after an Israeli girl was killed by a bomb planted in a Jerusalem bus, Karim Halaf publicly condemned the bombing.

In death as in life, Karim Halaf remained a symbol of the Palestinian struggle. At the time of his death, Ramallah was under curfew, following the killing of an Israeli settler. Severe restrictions were placed on Halaf's funeral by the military authorities, who feared it might turn into a demonstration. Many of the participants, including Uri Avnery of the ICIPP, were turned back at the entrance of Ramallah; but the idea of Israeli-Palestinian peace, though it might be turned back again and again, is sure to win through eventually.





While in Lebanon, events are moving very quickly (far too quickly for those killed in them), events in the diplomatic arena are moving much more sluggishly. President Mubarak's visit to Washington seemingly ended in failure. The visit of American envoy Richard Murphy to the Middle East is likely to end the same way, unless American (and Israeli) policy makers finally accept that there can be no peace without the Palestinians, and that no Palestinian negotiators exist, except those chosen or approved by the PLO.

The time for this is far from being unlimited. The situation on the West Bank is one of continuing, seething unrest, manifested in both violent demonstrations and occasional armed attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers. This situation has not yet reached Lebanese proportions; but should the Palestinians lose all hope of a negotiated settlement, their desperation, coupled with the presence of Israeli armed settlers and with other complicating factors, might create a very explosive situation indeed.

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Even though Israel had now been, for many years, the United States' military ally in the Middle East, Israel had hesitated to join directly in anti-Soviet activities. The last shreds of these restraints seem to disappear now: the Israeli government has agreed to the erection in Israel of Voice of America transmitters, broadcasting anti-Soviet propaganda; and seems about to accept President Reagan's invitation to participate in developing his "Star Wars" initiative. For those who would like to see Israel a truly independent state, rather than a pawn on a superpower chessboard, these are sad news indeed.

The Editor

## The road to prison

Thirty years old Shmuel Ha'spary is one of Israel's promising young playwrights. Recently, he has been imprisoned for refusing to serve in Lebanon during his military reserve service.

Ha'spary, who is a devoutly religious man, had gone through a long moral struggle, before reaching his present political positions. He had started out from extreme right-wing views, and, at the age of seventeen, had participated in violent right-wing demonstrations. His experiences as a combat soldier have deeply affected him. At one time, his unit had been ordered to carry out searches and arrests in the West Bank town of Jericho. One of his fellow soldiers had refused to participate in the searches. Ha'spary, who did not refuse at that time, was disturbed by the refuser's arguments.

The following excerpts from an interview, given by Ha'spary to *Yediot Aharonot*, describe the final stages of the process which led to his refusal and imprisonment.

I have refused to serve in Lebanon, and was sentenced to 35 days. I am a tank gunner, a corporal (. . .) I have been a fighter for 12 years (. . .) I fought in the Yom Kippur War and in Lebanon (. . .) I did everything: ambushes, opening routes, patrols.

(. . .) I have fought at Sultan Ya'akub<sup>1</sup> and saw terrible things. We fought for three and a half weeks, and already on the second day I felt deceived. Suddenly they would claim (on the Israeli radio) that the Syrians have opened fire, and you would know that in reality, you are the one who opened fire. . . In this way, they deceived our people, day after day. I knew the truth, but continued to fight. I shot down a Syrian helicopter, I have hit tanks, but I could not reconcile myself to the war. I sat in the tank and strengthened myself by reading, under the lamp, the writings of Rabbi Nahman of Breslav.<sup>2</sup> At some moments I imagined myself sitting at a video game board, and playing. I tried to convince myself that I was shooting imaginary monsters in a video game. Thus I was able to overcome fear, keep a cool head and fight calmly.

I returned home shaken. What a stupid war, what a presumption and transgression against Man and against God! (. . .)

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When I received a new order to serve in Lebanon I was very depressed. (. . .) I had terrible hesitations, a whole month of them<sup>3</sup>. I did not fear Lebanon, I feared the prison. I asked my friends what is going on there, and they gave me a grim picture. I feared I would get hit on the head with a mess-tin. I thought I would encounter the scum of the land there, and couldn't sleep at night (. . .)

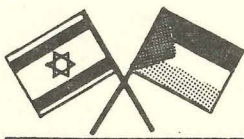
Had I wanted, I could have neatly gotten out of this business. I could have asked for deferment of service or gone abroad. But I didn't want that. I have been brought up to be a good Jew and a good Zionist, and not to evade responsibility. I told people: "I am a playwright and a theatre director, not a plumber. The theatre is my way of life. I cannot let myself make any concession, because afterwards I would not be able to write a single word". I knew that if I dodge this responsibility I would afterwards become a whore - I would start writing things in which I don't believe. I regarded this refusal as a personal test. (. . .) I knew that I must not fail this small test. I thought: what will happen if, God forbid, Sharon is elected as our leader? What will happen then, when I would have

1) One of the worst battles of the Lebanon War, in which an Israeli armoured column was trapped by a well-prepared Syrian ambush and decimated by anti-tank fire.

2) Among the most important and original thinkers of Hassidism.

3) By army regulations, a reserve soldier receives notice one month before being summoned to service.





to go to prison for writing a play or for voicing a political opinion? Would I then bow down, too? (. . .)

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(. . .) I went to base camp. I told the brigade commander that I am staying home, and he was astonished (. . .) For more than two hours he tried to convince me. "Why do you need this?" He asked me. "Soon, withdrawal will start, and the whole business of Lebanon will end. Anyway, you will be stationed in Marj Ayun, which is close to the Israeli border, and you will have no contact with the civilian population." I said to him: "This is hard for me, but if I have to go to prison, I will do it and hold my head high." I am not a dodger. Had I wanted, I could have had an easy job at the army's Education Corps. But I didn't want this — I preferred to stay in a combat unit.

The regimental commander left me alone for three hours, to deliberate with myself. Meanwhile, my comrades outside had already stowed the gear and prepared the jeeps. I knew I had to choose between my comrades, the salt of the earth, and the prison scum. I also knew that if I climb on the jeep, this would be interpreted as if I am afraid of prison — and I shrank from this conclusion. My comrades came and tried to convince me, and this was very hard. Only a combat soldier can understand this: the fellowship, the strong bond between you and your comrades, the desire to stay with them.

I stayed alone with my thoughts. It was hard. It is not easy to refuse, not at all easy. Refusal is a terrible word, especially when you are a combat soldier, most especially when you are also religious. (. . .) For a religious man in Israel, it is more difficult to refuse, because you are accustomed to accept authority. For you, the operative principle is "Dina D'malchuta Dina" ("The King's Law is binding" — a Talmud quotation). The (religious) public, your home, your family — everything is conditioning you. It is strange to see a refuser wearing a skullcap.<sup>4</sup>

I was brought before the brigade commander, to be tried by him. He again attempted to convince me. I felt that he understood my motives, but had no choice. My comrades had already departed for Lebanon, and I asked him to get it over with quickly. It took only about half a minute. (. . .) There was a terrible tension in the room. I didn't look at him; he didn't look at me. While talking to me, he kept his eyes on the paper before him. I was sentenced to 35 days in Military Prison No. 6. On the way to prison I managed to drink Coca-Cola, the last taste of freedom.

For reasons of space, the second half of the interview, describing Ha'spári's experiences in prison, is omitted. Though told from his very individual viewpoint, these experiences are essentially similar to those of Adam Keller, who was held in the same prison about two months before Ha'spári (see No. 11). (Ha'spári did find out

that the prisoners were not such "scum" as he feared, and got along with them quite well.)

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The Israeli army authorities have chosen not to test again Adam Keller's political and moral convictions; he was allowed to do his March military reserve service within the borders of Israel, and was thus spared a new term of imprisonment, which he was ready to accept rather than to serve in Lebanon.

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## Chronicles of the Peace Struggle

The following chronicle covers parts of February and March, 1985.

The greater length of this month's chronicle reflects a far greater number of events than in previous months. The main cause of this is the new intensification of the Lebanon War and the greater number of Israeli casualties there. This caused a great number of demonstrations, including the first large-scale "Peace Now" demonstration in a long time. This period has also seen a new intensification of political activity, much of it violent, in Israel's universities, which have been quiet during the last years.

Some controversy was raised in the peace movement concerning the decision of M. K. Yossi Sarid, an outspoken "dove", to volunteer for two weeks' service on army convoys in Lebanon, though Knesset Members are exempt from military reserve service. Sarid's supporters praised him as having decided to share the soldiers' risk and hardships; his detractors condemned his action as a cheap publicity stunt harmful to the anti-war struggle.

19/2 — At Kibbutz She'fa'im, the funeral of an Israeli colonel, killed in Lebanon, took place. During the funeral the deceased's sister shouted at the defense minister and army chief-of-staff, asking them to bring the Israeli soldiers back from Lebanon.

20/2 — A violent clash developed in the Jerusalem Hebrew University, as Arab students protested a lecture by Pierre Yazbek, the representative of the Lebanese right-wing "Phalange" militia. (Since then, Yazbek has been recalled to Beirut.)

21/2 — The Association of Israeli Actors protested police persecution of the Palestinian Al-Hakwati Theatre in East Jerusalem, and demanded that a permanent permit be granted to its operation. The Hakwati Theatre, which had received the acclaim of Israeli critics for the quality of its presentations, is regularly pestered by the police on various trumped-up technical charges.

23/2 — About 1500 of the "Peace Now" youth took part in a day of study on "Democracy Now". They participated in 25 workshops, dealing with the interrelations between art and democracy, under the guidance of prominent Israeli artists.

— On returning from a European tour, Prime Minister Peres was met at Ben Gurion airport by a

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4) *The mark of a religious Jew.*





demonstration of the Labor Party's young generation, which called upon him to work for immediate withdrawal from Lebanon, without stages, and promised him public support if he should do so. (The Labor "Young Generation", comprising all party members under 35 years, has its own organization, which usually takes "dovish" positions.)

25/2 - Members of "Parents Against Silence" and the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) picketed the Prime Minister's office, during the cabinet meeting, under the slogan: "Each day in Lebanon means more unnecessary bloodshed."

- Ilan Ben Israel, the secretary of Kibbutz Barkay, was jailed for 14 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon. He said at his trial that during the 1984 general elections campaign, he had supported Shimon Peres because of Peres' promise to pull out of Lebanon.

25-26/2 - "Struggle '85", a new coalition of organizations active in slums and underdeveloped towns, declared its intention to demonstrate during Prime Minister Peres' visit to the West Bank settlements, to protest the waste of money on these settlements. After being forbidden to demonstrate by the army authorities, they appealed to the Supreme Court. Peres' visit, which was due to take place on March 26th, was delayed due to weather conditions, and the demonstration took part at the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem. Several hundred demonstrators participated, despite snow and extremely cold weather.

The Supreme Court appeal was not cancelled, as "Struggle '85" still intends to demonstrate at the new date of Peres' settlements tour. The army commander of the Central Command claimed, at the Supreme Court, that the West Bank is under military administration, and therefore "political rights, including... the right to demonstrate, are not inalienable." (This does not prevent the military authorities from regularly permitting "Gush Emunim" settlers to demonstrate.) The Supreme Court's verdict was not yet given at the time of publication.

28/2 - A violent clash took part outside the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The racist Rabbi Kahane demonstrated with some of his followers, and shouted at a thousand counter-demonstrators: "Welcome, Jews! Welcome, Arab dogs!" At this, bottles and stones were thrown at Kahane. A large police force, including police horsemen, violently and brutally dispersed the anti-racist demonstrators, arresting 14 of them—nine Arabs and five Jews.

## Correction

In the article on the deportation of Abu-Ali Shahin, published in the previous issue (p. 2), we expressed our concern as to his fate, and our fear that he is still held a prisoner by the Israeli authorities. We are very glad to correct that mistake, as it has been ascertained that Shahin reached Beirut safely, and is now in Amman.

- Members of "Arabita", an Arab organization active in Jaffa, demonstrated at the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa municipality building, to protest the municipality's plan to destroy an Arab slum neighborhood, evict its inhabitants, and build expensive apartments on the site.

- Several dozen reserve paratroopers, who had just finished a term of service in Lebanon, demonstrated at the Defense Ministry in Tel-Aviv, demanding withdrawal from Lebanon. Some of them wore T-shirts with the slogan: "After I die, I will go to heaven - I have already been in hell!" (Such T-shirts, made by a Lebanon veteran, are quite popular among his fellows).

- All the Arab municipalities in Israel held a strike for several days, demanding that a sum of 1.7 billion Israeli Shekels, which was promised them by Prime Minister Peres, will be actually delivered by the Interior Ministry.

28/2 - 7/3 - Denis Goldberg, a white member of the ANC (African National Congress) reached Israel, after being released from 22 years of imprisonment in a South African prison. Within a short time, he became the center of public controversy in Israel because of his support for the Palestinians' right to self-determination, which he compared to the Black struggle in South Africa.

2/3 - One thousand five hundred people participated in a rally at Kibbutz Ga'ash, to mark the 1000th day of the Lebanon War. Kibbutz Ga'ash is a very active participant in the anti-war movement. On a kibbutz building overlooking the Tel-Aviv-Haifa highway, a sign is displayed marking the number of days since the beginning of the war, which is daily updated.

3/3 - Members of Mapam demonstrated at the Prime Minister's office, calling for immediate withdrawal from Lebanon and for Israeli acceptance of the Mubarak initiative.

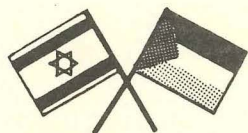
- A "Peace Now" delegation met with Prime Minister Peres and criticised the "Iron fist" policy in Lebanon.

6/3 - At night, fire was set to the door in the apartment of the actress Edna Flidel, who is active in the "Parents Against Silence" movement.

- Dozens of well-known Israeli artists demonstrated at the Ramlah Prison, demanding the release of Udi Adiv. In 1972 Adiv, a member of an extreme left-wing group, attempted to establish political contact with the PLO. He was tricked into visiting Syria and meeting people who were, in fact, operatives of Syrian Intelligence. On his return to Israel he was arrested and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, on a charge of espionage. In recent years, there had been a growing demand in Israeli public opinion for his release.

8/3 - At the Ashkelon prison, a vigil took place in support of the demands of the Arab prisoners, who were on a partial hunger strike. Their demands included a relief of overcrowding in the prison cells, the addition of fruits and vegetables to their diet, the right to receive books and magazines which have passed the strict censorship in force in the occupied territories, and similar demands.





9/3 - In protest against the deportation of the Palestinian leader Abu-Ali Shahin, members of the Shahin Defense Committee planted olive trees at the site of the old Muslim cemetery of the former Arab village Ba'shret, where Shahin was born and lived his first five years, before becoming a refugee in 1948. One demonstrator was arrested by the police, who also separated the Arab demonstrators from the Jewish ones, and photographed all the Arabs. Jewish farmers, who now live on the site, later uprooted the trees.

- In Jerusalem, a meeting and dialogue took place between members of the CRM and PLO supporters from the occupied territories, such as Mustafa Natsheh, the deposed mayor of Hebron, Dr. Sari Nusbah of Bir-Zeit University, Hana Seniora, publisher and editor of the East-Jerusalem El-Fajr, Adv. Ziad Abu-Ziad, and Adv. Zuhir El-Rais.

Adv. El-Rais of Gaza said he had been among the drafters of the original "Palestinian Charter" in 1964, and that he thinks this charter should now be amended and the demand for destroying Israel removed. He added that the very participation of Palestinians in this kind of dialogue with Zionist Israelis amounts to de-facto amendment of the Charter.

10/3 - Arab students held a sit-in strike at the Haifa University, to protest the suspension from studies of several Arab students for their participation in a January 18th, demonstration (see No. 13, p. 5). The University administration summoned the police, which violently dispersed the students, arresting nine of them and two journalists. During the struggle glass cases were smashed, and many students and policemen were wounded.

- Ilan Ben Israel was again jailed for refusing to serve in Lebanon, immediately on being released from his first imprisonment. This time, he was sentenced to 35 days imprisonment.

- The administration of the religious Bar-Ilan University prevented Rabbi Kahane from entering the university, where he was invited by the right-wing student union. (Bar-Ilan is the most right-wing university in Israel, and its student union is always a right-wing stronghold.) The decision to prevent the entry of Kahane was based on a common decision of all Israeli universities to bar him from entering their campuses.

11/3 - Kibbutz Har'el, whose basketball team was due to play against a team of Kiriati-Arba\* settlers, decided to boycott the game, because of the kibbutz's opposition to settlement on the West Bank. The Kibbutz came under strong fire not only from right-wingers, but even from Mapam leaders such as M. K. Victor Shem-Tov, who claimed that "politics and athletics should be kept separate." Bowing to this strong pressure, Kibbutz Har'el

\* Kibbutz Har'el, which is affiliated to Mapam's Kibbutz Movement, is among the most active in peace demonstrations and actions. Kiriati-Arba, near Hebron, was the first Gush-Emunim settlement in the occupied territories, and is one of the main centers of annexationist and anti-Arab activities.

changed its position and a week later, its basketball team did play against a team from a West Bank settlement.

- A rally took place in Haifa University, to protest police brutality. A 1,000 students and lecturers signed a protest petition.

- Following the car bomb explosion, in which 12 Israeli soldiers were killed in Lebanon, "Yesh Gvul" members picketed the Prime Minister's residence, demanding immediate withdrawal from Lebanon.

12/3 - Arab students demonstrated outside the Haifa Courtroom, where the detention of five of their fellows and of a Jewish journalist was extended. Five others of the students arrested on March 10th were released.

- In Tel-Aviv University, a large number of students and lecturers participated in a rally, demanding the opening of Bir-Zeit University,\* and immediate withdrawal from Lebanon. This rally marks a victory in a struggle waged for five years by students' and lecturers' organizations in Tel-Aviv to lift a ban against political demonstrations on the campus, imposed by the University administration (see No. 8, p. 11).

- A 20-member delegation representing the "America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace" (AICIPP, our American sister-organization), "Washington Area Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace", and "New Jewish Agenda", met in Washington with the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Dr. Esmat Abd-el-Meguid. They expressed support for the Egyptian efforts to involve the PLO in peace negotiations. The meeting was intended to counter a demonstration against the Egyptian initiative, held by five Jewish American organizations outside the Egyptian embassy.

12-21/3 - "Parents Against Silence" held daily pickets at the Defense Ministry in Tel-Aviv.

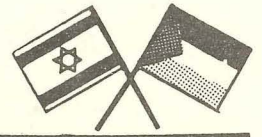
\* On March 10th, one of the periodic army raids on Bir-Zeit University took place. After "subversive material" was found in a student exhibition, the university's new campus, containing all the laboratories and most of the libraries, was closed for two months, and academic activity was confined to the cramped old campus.



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13/3 - A Haifa judge extended the detention of the five students and the journalist, until the end of judicial proceedings against them. It should be noted that such a severe decision is very rare in the cases of demonstrators, who are usually released on bail.

13-15/3 - Within a few days, four reserve soldiers were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 28 to 35 days, for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

14/3 - Hundreds of Jewish and Arab students participated in a Haifa march against police intervention in the university. M. K.'s Muhamad Miari of the PLP and Tufik Tubi of The Communist Party also participated.

In the Jerusalem University the university authorities decided to cancel the suspension from study of five Arab students who had participated in the February 20th demonstration. This decision took place after hundreds of Jewish and Arab students held a sit-in strike outside the dean of students' office, where the dean negotiated with a delegation of the Arab Students' Committee.

15/3 - Members of "Yesh Gvul" demonstrated at four important road junctions in Jerusalem.

- At the call of several organizations and political parties, many Israeli drivers lighted the headlights in their cars for three hours in the daytime, as a demonstration of their support for immediate withdrawal from Lebanon.

16/3 - About 20,000 people took part in the first large-scale "Peace Now" demonstration since the accession of Shimon Peres to the Prime Ministry. In this demonstration "Peace Now" lacked the support of some Labor members who participated in previous demonstrations, and the demonstration's success refuted doubts about the ability of "Peace Now" to act under these conditions (see No. 11, p. 4; No. 12, p. 2). Some of the speakers concentrated their fire on the Likud ministers in the "National Unity" cabinet; but the main speaker, Lt. Col (Res.) Yuval Neriah (a holder of Israel's highest military decoration) also mentioned Rabin's and Peres' having voted for the war on June 8th, 1982.

Eli Nisan, a news editor in the Israeli T.V., decided to broadcast Neriah's speech, despite being prohibited to do so by the television director. For this, Nisan was suspended from duty for two weeks, but his suspension was cancelled, following a protest by the television workers' union.

17/3 - The joint exhibition by Israeli and Palestinian artists, "Against Occupation, For Freedom of Expression" (see No. 13, p. 4, entry for January 10th), which has been shown without incident in Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, Nazareth and other places, met fierce right-wing opposition in Haifa. Following agitation by right-wing artists, which led practically to a split in the Haifa branch of the Israeli Artists' Association, the racist Likud M. K. Meir Cohen-Avidov broke into the exhibition and smashed two pictures. One of them, "Homage to Rabbi Kahane" showed a Star of David turning into a Swastika in the hands of a bludgeon-wielding thug representing Kahane. It was painted by Harold

Rubin, an immigrant from South Africa, where he had been prosecuted for a controversial painting. In the following days, Rubin regularly received anonymous obscene and threatening phone calls. Despite all these, the exhibition continued as planned, and the number of visitors even increased because of the publicity.

18/3 - Negev Beduins demonstrated at the Agriculture Ministry in Tel-Aviv, in protest of the confiscation of 45 goats by the "Green Patrol" (a brutal anti-Beduin policing unit). They tied ten kids to the ministry fence.

19/3 - The participation of Ariel Sharon in a seminar in Be'ersheba University was cancelled, after instructors and students mobilised to demonstrate against him and boycott the seminar.

22/3 - The Haifa district court ordered the release of three imprisoned Arab students, but confirmed the continued detention of three others.

23/3 - At the Arab village Magd-el-Krum in the Galilee, a large rally took place to protest the confiscation of land in three Arab villages.

24/3 - Dozens of highschool students, due to be drafted shortly, demonstrated at the defense ministry, calling for immediate withdrawal from Lebanon.

- Two Israeli demonstrators were arrested in Ramallah, near the entrance to the Israeli military government headquarters, where they had been holding a vigil to protest the closure of Bir-Zeit University's new campus. They were detained for several hours at the Ramallah police station.

26/3 - During a lecture by Ariel Sharon at the Haifa Bar Association, two lawyers stood up and held placards reading: "Sharon! The blood of our brothers calls out from the soil of Lebanon!". The two were evicted by police.

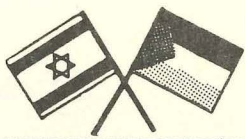
27/3 - A delegation of "Parents Against Silence" met with Defense Minister Rabin. Afterwards, they expressed disappointment at his refusal to produce a definite timetable for withdrawal from Lebanon.

30/3 - On March 30th each year, the Arab citizens of Israel mark "The Day of The Land", in memory of the 1976 Arab general strike, during which six Arabs were killed by Israeli security forces. This year, rallies took place in three Arab towns, in the north, center and south of Israel. Many Jews also took part. The day passed more calmly than in previous years, due, in large part, to the new policy instituted by Minister Ezer Weitzman (see No. 13, p. 4). This policy was manifested in official promises to grant municipal status to Um-el-Fahm and to give back to their Arab owners some lands in the Galilee, which were held by the Israeli army since 1948.

1/4 - The Minister of Police, Haim Ber-Lev, officially admitted that the police acted wrongly on January 30th in preventing a demonstration against Ariel Sharon at Ben Gurion Airport (see No. 13, p. 5).

- A new demonstration on the Ashkelon Prison strike (see March 8th) took part at the office of the Chief Warden of the Israeli prisons, in Jerusalem, where a new incumbent took over this post. A few





days later, the strike ended, after the new Chief Warden granted some of the prisoners' demands.

2/4 - In the center of Jerusalem, a racist rally of Rabbi Meir Kahane and a counter-demonstration by "Citizens Against Racism" took place. Police forces prevented physical contact between the two sides, who shouted slogans and curses at each other.

- Prime Minister Peres visited the family of a soldier who was killed in Lebanon three days previously. Family members, crying, called upon Peres to withdraw from Lebanon and prevent further bloodshed.

3/4 - Members of "Yesh Gvul" picketed the home of Defense Minister Rabin, protesting his threat to turn South Lebanon into "Scorched Earth".

- In the elections to the Haifa University student union, a center-left coalition won, ousting the previous right-wing student administration. When the right-wingers realised that they had lost, they assaulted their opponents. Three students were wounded.

During the 1970's all the student unions in Israel were controlled by extreme right-wing groups. It took many years of struggle by both Jews and Arabs, members of many political groups and parties, to end this situation. The victory in Haifa University completes a trend started in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem (See No. 8, p. 10-12).

4/4 - A vigil took place at the South African embassy in Tel-Aviv, to protest the brutal suppression of South African blacks.

8/4 - In Jerusalem, a demonstration took place to protest police brutality against the Arab students of El-Ibrahimia College in East Jerusalem. The police had broken into the college, using tear-gas and firing warning shots, and arrested 132 students, who protested the conditions of the prisoners in Ashkelon Prison, (See March 8th, April 1st.)

### Activities at home and abroad

Other than the shocking revelations contained in M. K. Matti Peled's open letter (*printed separately*), the most significant recent event for us was the Interior Minister's decision to grant municipal status to Um-El-Fahm, in fulfilment of the promise given when the PLP (Progressive List for Peace) M. K.'s supported the Labor candidate for the Knesset Speakership (*see No. 11*). To understand the significance of this, it must be noted that Um-el-Fahm is the largest of several large Arab towns in Israel which the government had, so far, persisted in regarding as "villages" and treating them as such, in matters such as social services, development, industrialization, etc. Though this will not change overnight, an important symbolic step forward has been made. It should also be noted that Um-el-Fahm was chosen by Rabbi Kahane as the symbol of his anti-Arab racist campaign (*see No. 10, p. 4*); the new development represents, therefore, a blow struck against racism on the ground chosen by racism itself.

### To our readers:

At the beginning of February, the airmail postage rates were drastically raised by the Israeli Ministry of Communications. Sending you this issue had cost us almost twice as much as sending the previous one. Your help is essential to the continued publication and distribution of *The Other Israel*. We expect those readers who have not yet subscribed to do so.

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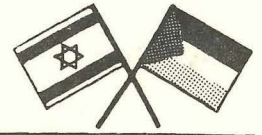
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M. K.'s Peled and Miari raised a large number of issues, both inside and outside the Knesset. They visited, in a Be'ersheba hospital, a Beduin shot and gravely wounded by Alon Galili, head of the notorious anti-Beduin "Green Patrol"; protested the intended demolition of 45 houses in the Jabaliah Refugee Camp, in the Gaza Strip; demanded a halt to the activity of right-wing M. K.'s, who collected money in the U.S. for the suspected members of the anti-Arab terrorist underground; and raised a great variety of other matters, ranging from cuts in health services to police inefficiency in dealing with rapes, and to plans to erect a new nuclear reactor in the Negev, without parliamentary approval. After Miari took part in a rally in memory of Fahd Kawasmeh, held in East Jerusalem, right-wing M. K.'s demanded to remove his, and the Communist Tufik Ziad's, parliamentary immunity – but this, like similar right-wing attempts, came to nothing.

On April 10th, the second anniversary of Dr. Issam Sartawi's assassination, an ICIPP delegation visited Sarta village on the West Bank, Sartawi's original home, and unveiled a plaque, made by a local artist, on which were inscribed Sartawi's profile and a Koran quotation. As this goes into print, preparations are completed for the granting of the annual Sartawi Literary Prize, due to take place on April 16th.

M. K. Matti Peled and Uri Avnery participated in a conference of Liberation Movements and Peace Organizations held at Turin, organised by the Italian "Committee Against Power Block Mentality". Other participants included Dr. Eugene Makhlouf, the PLO representative in Sweden; Rubén Zamora of El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN); Gladys Báez, of the Nicaraguan Sandinists; Patricia McFadden, of the South African ANC; Dieter Esche, member of the European Parliament for the German "Green" party; Jonathan Steele, chief political correspondent of the London *Guardian*, who represented the British peace movement; and others. The conference adopted Uri Avnery's proposal, to set up in Turin an International Coordination Center, through which the various Liberation Movements and Peace Organizations would be able to keep in touch with each other.

Later, Uri Avnery was invited to Lugano, where he gave an hour-long interview to "I Protagonisti", a program of the Swiss-Italian T.V.

## A widening of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue

On March 13th, an Israeli delegation, including four Knesset Members, met with Imad Shakur, Yassir Arafat's aide. The meeting took place at St. Augustin, near Bonn, West Germany, in the context of a seminar organised by the Christian-Democrat Konrad Adenauer Fund. This meeting represents a considerable widening of the Israeli participation in meetings with the PLO. The four M. K.'s were

Mordechai Bar-On of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), Yair Tzaban and Muhammad Watad of Mapam, and Ora Namir of the Labor Party. (In the last year, Ora Namir had become the foremost of the Labor doves). Beside the M. K.'s, there took part other members of the same parties and several well-known Israeli professors. Other participants were Raymonda Tawil of Ramallah and Lord Caradon, one of the initiators of U.N. resolution 242, who said that this resolution should now be amended by mentioning Palestinian national rights.

At the seminar, the Europeans met with the Palestinians and with the Israelis separately, and no direct meeting between the two delegations took place. Imad Shakur, a former Israeli citizen who speaks fluent Hebrew, was sent by Arafat for the specific purpose of meeting with the Israelis.

Shakur said to the Israelis that the PLO has made a far-reaching turn in its policies, and is now willing to talk with Zionists; and that the PLO supports the creation of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which would have some connection (federation, confederation, etc.) with Jordan. He said that the central current in the PLO is now willing to talk with Israel, but warned that if Israel will not respond, a dangerous setback towards extremism might result.

The Israeli M. K.'s demanded that the Palestinian leadership recognise Israel unequivocally and stop using violence. Imad Shakur responded that the PLO wants to reach this stage, but cannot do so unilaterally, without equivalent Israeli steps; and that recognising Israel without a guarantee of Israeli reciprocation might dangerously discredit the Palestinian leadership.

Following this meeting, one member of the Palestinian delegation, Ahmed Sidki Dajani, left the seminar, voicing his opposition to meeting Israelis. Haled El-Hasan, the head of the Palestinian delegation, explained that Dajani has been, for some time, drawing near to the Syrian anti-Arafat line, and was pushed over the brink by hearing the meeting with the Israeli M. K.'s described as "treason" by Radio Damascus. However, Dajani failed to draw with him any other member of the Palestinian delegation. Observers noted that, unlike past occasions, the debate between PLO "doves" and "hawks" was carried out openly, and no attempt was made to conceal it.

Interestingly, condemnation of the meeting by Israeli hawks was much weaker than after the PLP delegation's meeting with Arafat. (See No. 13, p. 3-4). Despite the fact that Labor M. K. Ora Namir had acted completely contrary to declared Labor policy, which opposes meetings with the PLO, the party kept silent and did not condemn her actions. Moreover, at about the same time, the Attorney-General declared, after a pro-forma police investigation, that there is no basis for prosecuting the PLP members who met Arafat; and the right-wing initiative to remove M. K.'s Miari and Peled's parliamentary immunity also fizzled out. Thus, the present situation seems favorable to a further widening of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. (See also the *Chronicles for March 9th*.)