

The Other Israel

Newsletter of the Israeli Council
for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

July, 1985

№ 16

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A FATEFUL INITIATIVE

At the time of writing, the Middle East diplomatic initiative has again come to the forefront, with American envoy Richard Murphy due to meet a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. As may have been expected, the Israeli government has taken a rejectionist position, presuming to arrogate to itself the right of deciding who will, or will not, represent the Palestinian people.

The position of the American administration is far from clear. Certainly, the fate of previous American initiatives, such as the 1982 Reagan Plan which was allowed to fade away, is not encouraging. American policy makers should, however, realise that the stakes are now greater than ever before: never was the PLO leadership so firmly committed to the path of peace negotiations; never was Israeli society so deeply divided; and precisely because peace is now a real possibility, the enemies of peace are more than ever militant, and ready to go to greater extremes in both word and deed (see article on the Israeli Right). Should the present initiative end in failure, the resulting backlash, of Jewish extremism and Arab extremism feeding and reinforcing each other, may lead to incalculable disaster.

* * *

On July 26, the murdered bodies of two Israelis, a man and a woman, were found hidden in a cave, in the north of Israel. Three Palestinian teenagers, aged 16, living in the West Bank were apprehended and are accused of the double murder. The whole Palestinian community in Israel and in the occupied territories is now under heavy attack. In Afula (located in the north), the murdered victim's home-town, large scale racist riots broke out; Arabs and Jews mistaken for Arabs – were beaten up; shops and restaurants belonging to Arabs were wrecked; the raging mob yelled, "Kahane", "Kahane", "Kahane". Moreover, it seems that the Israeli Government intends to use these murders as the pretext for implementing harsh measures against the inhabitants of the occupied territories such as mass expulsion, and possibly reintroducing the death penalty, which was abolished in Israel in the 1950's. Furthermore, former Defense Minister, Moshe Arens (Likud) is proposing to disqualify the PLP from running in the next general elections, because of its unequivocal support for an Israeli-PLO dialogue. The perpetrators of this hideous crime, have rendered a great service to the racists and the enemies of peace; they deserve outmost condemnation from those who seek peace and co-existence.

* * *

EMERGENCY!

At the time of writing, July 31, the Israeli government's Anti-Peace Law, which would make any contact with the PLO a criminal offence, is being debated in the Knesset. We desperately need your help and solidarity. (See page 5).



Israel's Wage Earners Paying the Price

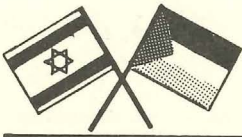
Deep cuts in the Government's social, educational, economic and health budget; as well as in subsidies for foodstuffs; thirty to forty percent slashing of workers wages – these measures constitute the cornerstone of the National Coalition Government's new austerity plan. Israel's large economic concerns and the highly inflated defense budget – estimated at about 30 percent of the country's Gross National Product – were not touched. Thus, while in the center of Tel-Aviv the construction of the multi-million dollar skyscraper – designed to be the tallest building in the Middle East – for the Defense Department was in full swing, prices of food staples, public transportation, clothes, etc., more than doubled.

Spontaneous strikes by workers broke out throughout the country. Neighborhood committees in poverty-stricken areas, such as the Katamonim in Jerusalem, called on residents to demonstrate. The situation is tense and it looks as if the *Histadrut*, Israel's powerful worker's federation, is losing control.

Though the *Histadrut* is dominated by Prime Minister Peres' Labor Party, both he and Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i (Liberals) kept the austerity plan secret from its leaders. Furthermore, in order to offset *Histadrut* opposition, Prime Minister Peres has threatened, when the plan was made public, to enforce the economic measures by Emergency Regulations. These draconian regulations, inherited from British colonial rule, allow the Government to circumvent all forms of judicial process-of-law. Incorporated into Israeli law with the birth of the State in 1948, the regulations have since then been employed nearly exclusively against the Palestinian Arabs. Threats are now being made to use them against Israel's workers. The Government's immediate aim is to suspend the existing cost-of-living agreement, whereby the workers are compensated for the monthly cost-of-living index. Though past wage hikes always fell short of the inflation rate, even these increases are now perceived by the Government as a burden on the budget.

There is little doubt that Israel is in the midst of a very grave economic crisis, but its causes are clearly political and not economic. Maintaining a military force equal to that of a major power is unquestionably beyond the means of a state, such as Israel, even with such a patron as America pumping in approximately three billion dollars a year. The overall expenditure for the Lebanon War is believed to have been close to ten billion dollars. The price tag for Israel's military-industrial complex's ambition to build its own jet fighter planes (The Lavi Project) is several billions. Hundreds of millions of dollars have already been spent on the settlements and there are plans to spend many millions more. The strain on Israel's economy is therefore enormous. Faced with the alternative – "money for butter or money for guns" – the National Coalition Government's austerity plan clearly shows that both Labor and *Likud* opted for the latter.

A political settlement between Israel and the Arab world, especially the Palestinians, would certainly create the propitious climate for cuts in defense spending and suspension of the costly settlement policy. The Arafat-Hussein peace initiative is an extraordinary opportunity which must not be missed. Unfortunately, the Government has so far given indications that it is in no mood for any sort of serious talks. It is the task of the peace movement to point out the connection between the economic crisis and the political stalemate.



ISRAEL STILL IN LEBANON

On June 10 the headlines of three Israeli dailies read: "Israel completing the last stage of its withdrawal from Lebanon today." However, developments have since shown that this was mere wishful thinking. In July, Israeli casualties were still being reported from South Lebanon. Israeli journalists, permitted to enter South Lebanon, photographed Israeli soldiers still stationed there.

Defense Minister Itzhak Rabin has recently made it clear that Israel will cross the border whenever it considers it "necessary": "We will violate international law," he said, "in order to hit at the terrorists. . ." Israel's involvement in Lebanese affairs is therefore far from over.

Israel-Amal Rapprochement

Ever since May this year, Israel and the Lebanese Shi'ite militia Amal have obviously been signaling a mutual desire for some sort of understanding. In May, Israel released 250 of the 1,000 Shi'ite detainees who had been illegally transferred across the border in April¹. Israeli Defense Ministry officials confirmed that the released Shi'ites were to reinforce the Amal forces besieging (with Syrian backing) the Palestinian refugee camps and PLO strongholds in West Beirut – Sabra, Shatila, and Bourje –El-Barajne². The release was followed by another Israeli move: permission to Amal to use the port facilities of Nakura, located in the Israeli-controlled "Security Belt". Reciprocating Israel's good will gestures, Amal leader Nabih Berri announced in Beirut that his movement would not permit the Palestinian refugee camps to be turned into territorial enclaves, or permit the Palestinians to stage attacks on Israel from the South. Almost overnight the Israeli press stopped calling the Shi'ites "terrorists" and instead referred to them as "fighters". What had seemed inconceivable four-five months ago, when fierce Shi'ite resistance caused daily Israeli casualties, has now become a reality: the hopes of both Israel and Amal (backed by Syria) to seriously weaken, if not destroy, the PLO, has driven former enemies into an unspoken alliance³. What are the aims of this alliance?

1. *The Shi'ites along with scores of Palestinians, had been in confinement since the spring, when Israel implemented its "Iron Fist" policy against fierce and bloody Shi'ite resistance. Although international law forbids the transfer of detainees to the occupying force's country, Israel moved about a thousand detainees from the huge Israeli-built Al-Ansar detention camp in Southern Lebanon across the border into Israel, in the course of its partial withdrawal from the South in April.*

2. *Palestinian casualties are heavy: close to a thousand killed – several hundred of whom were massacred – and more than two thousand wounded. As if the 1982 Phalangist massacre was not enough, the Shatila refugee camp is now completely destroyed while the Sabra and Bourje –El-Barajne camps are reported to be badly damaged.*

3. *Israel and Syria, sworn enemies, had forged a de-facto alliance in 1976, and renewed it in late 1983 during the Syrian siege of Tripoli, a PLO stronghold. While Arafat's forces were being attacked by Syrian and Syrian-supported Palestinian forces on land, Israel's Navy blockaded the port.*

Amal's ambition is clear: in its bid for Shi'ite political hegemony in Lebanon, armed Palestinian militias – in the Palestinian view, a vital necessity, considering past massacres – are perceived as a challenge; Shi'ite Amal leader Nabih Berri, in his capacity as Minister for Southern Lebanon (also Minister of Justice) hopes to gain Israel's tacit consent to Shi'ite control of the region. For its part, Israel welcomes any blow given to the Palestinians by anyone, anywhere and at any time, yet it does have other immediate objectives. Given that its ambition to create a multi-communal mercenary force in the South has proved a failure, Israel may believe that it can now play its Shi'ite card.

The Plight Of The Ethiopians

About half a year has passed since the great migration of the Ethiopian Jews to Israel. At the time (No.12) we voiced some misgivings at the reception they were about to receive. Unfortunately, this has proved all too justified. The religious establishment in Israel had, from the start, refused to recognise the black-skinned Ethiopians as complete Jews, demanding that they undergo a "ritual conversion to Judaism". The Ethiopians, who have tenaciously maintained a Jewish identity for thousands of years, absolutely refused this humiliating demand.

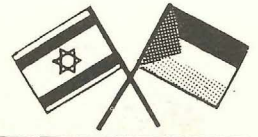
In retaliation, the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate (which, by law, has complete control of Jewish marriages in Israel) had decreed that Ethiopians who refuse to be "converted to Judaism" will not be married or divorced. (The Ethiopians' own religious leaders, who are something quite different from ordinary rabbis, are not allowed to perform marriages in Israel.) At the time of writing, a large number of Ethiopian Jews are about to stage a protest march across the breadth of Israel.

All those who have hailed the airlifting of the Ethiopians to Israel as a great humanitarian gesture should now raise their voices in protest, as these new immigrants become victims of religious intolerance and barely concealed racism.

Chronicles of The Peace Struggle

2/6 – Hashem Mahamid, mayor of Umm-el-Fahm¹, wrote to the Israeli President, the

1. *Umm-el-Fahm with its 25,000 inhabitants, located north of Haifa, is the largest of Israel's Arab villages. Due to the parliamentary efforts by the PLP ("Progressive List for Peace") it has recently gained the status of a municipality.*



Prime Minister and other cabinet members asking them to investigate statements made by I.D.F. officers to the effect that ". . . they would act in Umm-el-Fahm as they do in the villages of Southern Lebanon - shooting at every door etc. . ." The mayor expressed his surprise that such dangerous statements, published in a weekly journal have not yet received an official response.

5/6 - For three consecutive years, like a strict ritual, members of Kibbutz Ga'ash tally the days since the beginning of the Lebanon War on a large bill-board near an old building overlooking the Tel-Aviv Haifa highway.

The number today read one thousand and ninety-five days (exactly three years since the beginning of the Lebanon War), and in commemoration, an artists' gathering was held in the building, now turned museum. In an exhibition entitled "Crossing a Border" artists from the kibbutz movement and others displayed their works, and several poets read from their writings on the Lebanon War.

Ezra Rabin, secretary of the Kibbutz Ha-Artzi (affiliated with Mapam), reminded everyone present that this was not a farewell party and that the war had not yet ended. "All those who went to Beirut, "he said", meant Hebron, and those who went to Sabra and Shatila meant the refugee camps in Southern Lebanon. . ."

* * *

One hundred and fifty men and women took part in a demonstration held by "Campus" - a Jewish-Arab student movement at Tel-Aviv University - in commemoration of three years since the outbreak of the Lebanon War and nineteen years since the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories.

* * *

Supporters of "The Committee for Solidarity with Bir-Zeit University"² picketed the Prime Minister's home.

7/6 - Youth leaders of Hashomer Ha-Tzair, Mapam's Youth Movement, were informed that the racist parliamentary member Meir Kahane was to hold a demonstration at Ashkelon city center. A counter - demonstration was immediately planned for. A police permit was given and placards calling for the demonstration were prepared. When several members of the youth movement tried to post the placards in one of the city's technical high schools they were prevented by the school's principal from doing so. He used foul language and threatened several students belonging to Hashomer Ha-Tzair with expulsion. A complaint has been submitted to

the Minister of Education Itzhak Navon and to the mayor of Ashkelon.

8/6 - Several hundred members of "Yesh Gvul"³ held a demonstration at Tel-Aviv city center commemorating eighteen years of Israeli occupation in the West Bank and three years of the Lebanon War. Along with the demonstration signatures were collected against military service in the occupied territories.

19/6 - Another session of the trial of the poet Yitzhak La'or, was held in Tel-Aviv. Prosecuted for his participation in the first demonstration against the Lebanon War, which was dispersed by the police on June 8th, 1982, La'or is accused of "having assaulted policemen" though in fact he was the one assaulted. In this session, well-known members of the Israeli academic community, who participated in the same demonstration, testified in his favor.

Mr. La'or also has had problems in publishing his latest book of poems. His regular publishing house, owned by the Labor Party's kibbutz movement, refused to include in the book several controversial political poems. However, he has found recently another publishing house willing to publish the book uncensored.

21/6 - Dr. Kaplanski, founder and head of the "School for the Values of the Labor Movement", located in the poverty-stricken Katamonim quarter of Jerusalem, refuses to allow end of school year trips to the occupied territories as, for example, to Canada Park. The huge park, built by Jewish donations from Canada, is located in the Latrun valley, in the occupied West Bank. While for thousands of Israelis the Park is a popular picnic site on weekends, for thousands of Palestinians living in the refugee camps near the Arab city of Ramallah (West Bank), the lands of Canada Park were once their home. Four Palestinian villages in the area were razed to the ground and its inhabitants expelled immediately following the 1967 war by the then Labor Government.

23/6 - The "Movement for Co-existence and against Racism" sent a letter to the Attorney General, Professor Itzhak Zamir, demanding the prosecution of "Gush Emunim" leaders for incitement to racism against the Arab community in Israel. Racist attacks against the Arabs were heard at the "Gush Emunim" demonstration on June 16 in center Tel-Aviv.

28/6 - In Rehovot, a town south of Tel-Aviv, Rabbi Kahane failed in an attempt to found a racist youth movement. Only about 30 youth attended his meeting, as compared to several hundred anti-racist teen-agers who demonstrated outside.

2. The "Committee" is a radical protest movement, best known for its several highly publicised demonstrations in the occupied territories during the years 1981-82.

3. "Yesh Gvul" (literally: There is a limit/border) is a non-aligned group of reserve soldiers, who refuse to serve in the Lebanon War. Since the beginning of the war more than a hundred of its members have been imprisoned for various periods of time.



Jewish-Arab volunteer workcamp

For the third consecutive year, a volunteer workcamp will take place in Jaffa, between August 9th and 17th, to help the Arab inhabitants who live under slum conditions and are neglected by the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa Municipality. Volunteers of any nationality, from Israel or from abroad, are welcome. For further details write to Nahleh Shaker, 20 Azah St., Jaffa, Israel, or call (03) 835176; (03) 868155; (03) 839146.

Struggle Against The Anti-Peace Law

Throughout the past few weeks, an intense struggle has been going on against the Government's proposed "Anti-Peace Bill", which would make any contact between Israelis and PLO representatives a criminal offence, punishable by three years imprisonment. (By existing Israeli law, such a meeting is legal).

Many protest activities against the "Anti-Peace Bill" were conducted, both in Israel and abroad. "Ha'aretz" published a protest petition with more than 200 signatures including those of prominent artists and members of the academic community. 54 French personalities, including Jean Paul Aron, Michel Balabane, Raymond Benaim, Joyce Blau, Sonya Dayan-Herzbrun, Jacques Hassoun, Maxime Rodinson, Dominique Schiff, Laurent Schwartz, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Paul Kessler, Olivier Revault D'Allone and many others, have sent a protest telegram to Prime Minister Peres; many other letters and telegrams continue to pour in from France, Italy, US, Denmark, The Netherlands and other countries.

(We apologise to all persons and organizations whose names are not expressly mentioned here, we are glad to note they were too numerous for that.)

The PLP sent letters to the Socialist International Secretariat and its member parties, asking them to intercede with Prime Minister Peres.



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In a Meeting held in Tel-Aviv, Knesset Members Muhammad Wattad of Mapam and Mordechai Bar-On of the CRM (Civil Rights Movements) pledged their support to this struggle,

At the time of writing, July 31, the Knesset has started debating the proposed bill. Voting on it was put off following acrimonious debates between the two big blocs, Labor and Likud, and also within the Labor Party itself. However, the vote will likely take place within a few weeks. Prime Minister Peres has now pledged his support for the bill, though "with a different wording", and thus it is likely to gain a majority, unless some heavy pressure is put on Peres to change his mind. **AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT, MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED YOUR HELP AND SOLIDARITY.** We call upon you to send as many protest telegrams and/or letters as possible to: Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Prime Minister's Office, Jerusalem, Israel; with copies to us at P.O.B. 956, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

* * *
Despite the urgency of this struggle, the PLP is involved in many other issues, of which only a brief mention can be made.

The PLP firmly opposed the government's economic austerity plan, pointing out the political roots of the economic crisis and demanding an end to settlement in the occupied territories and cuts in the swollen defense budget. (This demand, on which Matti Peled used to be a lone voice in the Knesset, has recently been accepted by many others, including Right-wingers.)

On the Knesset floor, Matti Peled opposed Israeli participation in President Reagan's "Star Wars" plan.

Immediately after the appointment of Eduard Shevardnadze as the new Soviet Foreign Minister, the PLP sent him a telegram, expressing hope for the early convening of an International Peace Conference on The Middle East, with the participation of all interested parties, the two great powers, Israel and the PLO, and calling upon him to resume diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel, as one of the steps necessary to prepare such a conference.

M. K.'s Muhammad Miari and Matti Peled and Rev. Riah Abu-El-Asal of the PLP executive met with the British and Austrian Ambassadors to Israel, and the Political Officer at the US Embassy. All the diplomats showed great interest in the PLP's views, and in The Anti-Peace Law and other government measures against the PLP. These meetings, and particularly the one with the Americans, aroused great interest in the Israeli media.

The PLP was able to expose the full list of 350 books which are banned in the occupied territories. Previously, this list was kept secret from the inhabitants in the occupied territories, who were liable to be imprisoned for possessing these books. It includes not only Palestinian nationalist literature, but also books of literary criticism, on such diverse subjects as Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and the



Watergate Affair, Issac Deutscher's "The Non-Jewish Jew", a book on "Gush Emunim" by the Israeli journalist Danny Rubinstein, (a correspondent of the Israeli Labor Party's paper), and even the Arab translation of the diaries of Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism. . .

Another issue addressed was the case of Journalist Amnon Kapeliuk, who is due to be prosecuted for having visited Jordan. Technically, Kapeliuk did break an old law, enacted in the early 1950's, which forbids Israelis to visit "Enemy Countries", which are defined as those countries who fought against Israel in 1948. (The North African Arab states, which were still French colonies when the law was enacted, are not considered "Enemy Countries").

The ICIPP sent a letter to the Attorney-General, calling upon him to recognise the positive value of Kapeliuk's journalistic role, in going to Jordan and giving the Israeli public a first-hand account of the positions of both the PLO leadership and the Jordanian court. However, the Attorney-General, who has been subjected to strong Right-wing pressure and accused of being "a Leftist", made clear his intention to go on with the prosecution.

At the beginning of June Dr. Ya'akov Arnon of the ICIPP attended, in The Hague, a conference of E.N.D. (European Nuclear Disarmament.) Together with M. K. Muhammad Wattad of Mapam and Hillel Shenkar of the Israeli "New Outlook" magazine, they met with a Palestinian delegation consisting of Ghazi Khouri, the PLO representative in The Netherlands, Imad Shakur, Yassir Arafat's aide, Ilan Ha'levy, a former Israeli citizen who became a member of the PLO, and Mary Chas of Gaza.

Israelis and Palestinians addressed together the E.N.D. Conference. Originally, the Dutch "Pax Christi" organization, which organized the conference, intended a much wider Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, involving on the Israeli side many members of Mapam, the CRM, "Peace Now" and Labor doves. Unfortunately, the Israeli Government succeeded in pressuring and intimidating most of them and thus prevented their participation; nevertheless, even the smaller meeting received wide publicity.

A major Dutch newspaper, De Telegraaf, printed, on its front page, a picture of Dr. Arnon and Ghazi Khouri shaking hands. This has particular significance in view of the proposed "Anti-Peace Law" that would make such meetings illegal.

Women in Nairobi

In the U.N. conference on The Decade of Women, which took place in Nairobi, Kenya, Debby Lerman of the PLP took part in "forum '85" the parallel conference of NGO's (Non Governmental Organizations).

Other Israeli participants in the NGO's forum included representatives of the CRM (Civil Rights Movement), "Peace Now", and the Israeli Communist Party. The presence of this wide variety

of Israeli women supporting peace helped offset the negative impression created by the official Israeli delegation, which repeated the government's reactionist positions.

Debby Lerman dashed several times with the official delegation; at one time, an official Israeli delegate attempted to tear up a petition against the "Anti-Peace Law". Debby Lerman met many Palestinian women, both from the occupied territories and from the PLO's Union of Palestinian Women.

The Right in Israel

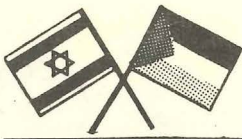
Last week, after a long and passionate 14 month trial, members of the anti-Arab Jewish terrorist underground were found guilty of attempting to murder West Bank mayors in June 1980 (two were severely crippled); opening fire on students of the Islamic College in Hebron in June 1983 (three were killed); planning to blow up the Temple Mount mosques, (an action which, in the words of the accused, would hasten the Day of Redemption); rigging ten Arab buses with bombs in April 1984. Had these buses exploded, about five hundred Palestinian men, women and children might have been killed.

Israeli security forces, on the track of the underground for months, frustrated this murderous plan at the last moment. On the day that the explosives fastened to the bottom of the buses were to explode (27/4/84), security forces moved in. The bombs were removed and twenty-five members of the underground were rounded up. Ten of the underground's "lightweights" received relatively short sentences during the past few months, following deals made with the prosecution. Several of them have in the meantime been released.

The remaining fifteen terrorists, the underground's hardcore, were sentenced on July 22. Three of the leaders were given mandatory life sentences for murder. The other twelve received minimum sentences, ranging from four months to seven years. However, chances are small that any of them will serve even a fraction of their sentences in prison.

From the beginning, following their arrest fourteen month ago, utmost sympathy, coming from the Likud and other mainstream Right-wing and religious parties, was accorded to the Jewish terrorists. A lobby for the underground was formed in the Knesset. It included activists from the Right and Labor's right-wing, such as Arieh Nachamkin, Labor's Minister of Agriculture. In May, support for the terrorists turned into a deluge, following Israel's release of 1150 Palestinian prisoners - a number of whom were responsible for bloody attacks against Israeli civilians in the seventies - in exchange for three Israeli soldiers captured during the Lebanon War by Ahmed Jabril's pro-Syrian organization. (*See Other Israel No. 15*)

In mid-June (*see chronicle, June 16*), Gush-Emunim, the occupied territories ultra-Right settlers' movement, planned to hold a



demonstration in Tel-Aviv calling for a pardon for the underground members. Since the Attorney General forbade the subject of the demonstration – being still sub-judice – the Gush-Emunim leaders circumvented his decision and changed their ostensible purpose to “a demonstration against terror”. About 100,000 people came and listened for several hours to a violent, racist, verbal orgy against Palestinian Arabs living in Israel and in the occupied territories. The Palestinians were accused of everything imaginable: murder, seducing Jewish women, undermining morality, taking over the country, causing Israel grave economic ills, etc. Speakers openly advocated expelling the Arabs from the country. No anti-Semite could have surpassed the racist attacks vented against the Arab population in this gathering.

The news media, long claimed by the Right to be in Leftist hands, were also severely battered. A well known TV broadcaster covering the demonstration was physically assaulted. It goes without saying that the Attorney General’s decision was ignored. Scores of banners and placards demanding the release of the terrorists were displayed. Though organized by Gush-Emunim, leading members of Knesset from the Right and the religious parties were present at the demonstration.

While true that leaders of the Likud (Shamir, Sharon) did not participate personally in the demonstration, they are now spearheading the mounting campaign for the terrorists’ pardon and release. It is now evident that the prisoners’ exchange in May was, for many of the underground’s implicit supporters in the center of the Establishment, the needed pretext for an unabashed call for their pardon. Indeed, it is not farfetched to believe that when the Likud and several of Labor’s ministers voted in the Cabinet for the prisoners exchange, a possible pardon for members of the underground in the near future was in their minds.

However, even had no pretext existed, it is more than likely that the Jewish terrorists will be pardoned and released after serving relatively short prison terms.

The present political climate in the country, best characterized by its rabid racist and chauvinistic attitudes towards non-Jews in general, but especially towards Palestinian Arabs, is the hotbed which bred the terrorist underground and Kahane’s movement. Neither of them are fringe elements in Israel’s society. Rather, they are its legitimate sons. They were born and bred in a country whose recognized leaders (Labor, Likud) deny the existence of the Palestinian people. Former Labor Prime Minister, Golda Meir, in an often-quoted remark made in the early seventies, declared: “There are no Palestinians”. Being “non-existent”, they can be removed (an estimated 300,000 were expelled from the West Bank in 1967); their lands can be confiscated (more than 50 percent of Palestinian lands in the occupied territories have been already expropriated) and the region “Judaized” by means of settlements. The distance is not great from Golda Meir’s declaration that there are no Palestinians to Menachem Begin’s comment made during the

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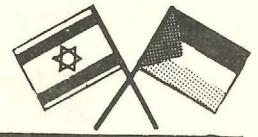
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Lebanon War, that the Palestinian fighters are "two-legged animals". That is precisely the distance dividing most of Labor from Likud. On the subject of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Labor and Likud positions are indistinguishable: No to a Palestinian State; No to a complete withdrawal; No to negotiations with the PLO. Little wonder, therefore, that Labor, after so many years in power, should have been rejected by the Israeli voters in 1977. Why vote for a cheap imitation (Labor) when you can have the real thing (Likud)?

Gush-Emunim, from whose midst and milieu the anti-Arab Jewish terrorist underground arose, made its earliest and most significant strides in the years following the 1967 war, under the aegis of the Labor Government. Clandestinely, under cover of darkness, members of Gush-Emunim would cross the "Green Line" (the border between the West Bank and Israel) with caravans and barbed wire, enclose a region, and hoist the national flag. The Israeli public would wake in the morning to hear of another Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. This method was repeated many times. Though Gush-Emunim's activities were never authorized beforehand, the Labor Governments almost always retroactively gave way and recognized the settlements. With sub-machine-guns swinging at their sides, the settlers have been subjecting the local Palestinian population to a reign of terror, but all the Labor governments, and the Likud after 1977, continued to pamper and commend their "idealistic" and "pioneering" spirit.

In light of this, it is not surprising that recent public opinion polls taken among Israeli teenagers — born after 1967 and Israel's future electorate — show that more than 50 percent of them support Right-wing groups, including Kahane's party; 46 percent support the activities of the anti-Arab Jewish terrorist underground; 83 percent demand the death penalty for Palestinian "terrorists"; and 62 percent support the annexation of the occupied territories.

However, the picture is not all that bleak. Other public opinion polls clearly show radicalisation on the other side of the political spectrum, manifested by an increase in the number of Israelis who favor negotiations with the PLO. We present below the results of one of these polls.

Herzl Schubert

Growing public support for negotiations with the PLO

The following is a translation of an article published in the daily newspaper "Ha'aretz" on May 10th, describing the results of a public opinion poll conducted for "Ha'aretz" by "Pori" (public opinion research institute).

(. . .) 37 percent of the Israeli public now support the participation of a Palestinian delegation in a peace conference. Ten years ago, in the "Pori" poll conducted in April 1975, only 15,4

percent supported Palestinian participation in the Geneva Conference, which was supposed to take place at that time. It seems, then, that a considerable turnabout has taken place and the number supporting Palestinian participation has more than doubled.

26,6 percent also believe that the Israeli government should agree to (send representatives to) meet with Arafat, to discuss the solving of the Palestinian problem. Ten years ago, in the "Pori" poll of February 1975, only 16,6 percent supported this view. This is a rise by 10 percent in the number of those who support a meeting with Arafat himself.

Beyond the numbers mentioned, an additional 6,8 percent support Palestinian participation in a peace conference and an additional 3,9 percent support a meeting with Arafat, but qualify these positions by making such negotiations subject to various conditions, such as "recognition of Israel", "abolishing the Palestinian Covenant" and "cessation of terrorist activities".

The poll was conducted by personal interview among 1,200 men and women from all over Israel, who constitute a representative sample of the Jewish urban population.*

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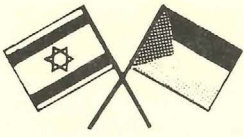
These results clearly show that the supporters of dialogue with the Palestinians are far from being a fringe phenomenon in Israel; that they comprise, in fact, a large section of the Israeli public. Furthermore, the comparison of developments over ten years shows that this tendency is constantly growing, despite occasional bursts of chauvinist or racist hysteria.

The problem facing the peace movement is that this tendency is not adequately reflected on the parliamentary level; among the Knesset Membership there is nothing like 26,6 percent support for negotiations with the PLO.

The main reason for this is that most of the Israeli electorate regard elections as a contest for power between the two big parties, Labor and Likud, and disregard all other parties. Thus, most of the 26,6 percent mentioned in the poll vote for Labor, which they consider the only alternative to the Likud, even though Labor is firmly opposed to negotiations with the PLO.

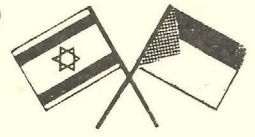
There are two ways, not mutually exclusive, in which this situation could be changed: by convincing these voters to vote for peace parties which really represent their views — or by convincing the Labor doves that, by openly supporting and participating in dialogue with the PLO, they more truly represent their voters.

* Israeli public opinion researchers regularly omit the Arab population from their samples, claiming technical difficulties due to the traditional character of Arab society. Among the Arab citizens of Israel (about 17 percent of all citizens), support for negotiations with the PLO is, presumably, almost universal.



The Other Israel

EMERGENCY ISSUE



THE PEACE FORCES UNDER ATTACK

On July 8th, the Israeli government presented to the Knesset a bill that would make any meeting between Israelis and PLO members a criminal offense punishable by three years' imprisonment. This is the latest stage in a campaign which began on June 11th, with the decision of the Knesset House Committee to limit the parliamentary immunity of M. K. Muhammad Miari of the PLP, making him subject to police searches of his home and person and to being stopped at police roadblocks. A second step in the government campaign was an order published by the Interior Minister, using his powers under The Emergency Regulations, forbidding Adv. Kamel Daher of Nazareth from leaving Israel for a whole year. Adv. Daher is a member of the PLP executive, and had taken part in the February meeting with PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat. Another step considered by the government parties is to change the Electoral Law and introduce a minimum vote requirement of either 2.5 percent or 4 percent, disqualifying parties who get fewer votes. (Under the present law, 1 percent of the votes is enough to ensure parliamentary representation). Such an electoral law will eliminate several small parties from the Knesset: but the initiators make no secret of the fact that the PLP is the principal target. Still another proposed law is the government's so-called "Anti-Racism Bill" which, besides containing clauses against racist parties, would empower the Central Elections Committee to disqualify electoral lists that "deny the existence of the State of Israel, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence". The Declaration of Independence is a long document, whose language is ideological and rhetorical, without exact legal definitions, and open to many conflicting interpretations. The task of interpretation would be up to the politicians who sit on the Central Elections Committee, some of whom are notorious extreme right-wingers, while others are party hacks accustomed to conducting questionable deals. The bill would also empower the Central Elections Committee to disqualify lists which are suspected of being "a cover for illegal activities"; while the new companion bill makes meetings with the PLO - one of the PLP's main activities - an illegal activity. (According to

existing Israeli laws, meeting PLO representatives is legal, as the Attorney-General ruled several times. His ruling was upheld by the Supreme Court.) This governmental campaign is, clearly, the government's response to the growing legitimacy of contacts with the PLO, which was manifested in meetings of several Knesset Members with PLO representatives: in public opinion polls showing more than a quarter of the Israeli public in favor of negotiations with the PLO; in the statements of such personalities as Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat, of the right-wing Likud bloc, who declared himself in favor of negotiations with the PLO. All of these pose a serious threat to the government's rejectionist policies. The latest moves are clearly intended to intimidate the doves within the Labor Party itself and in such parties as Mapam and the CRM (Civil Rights Movement); already, these doves were pressured by the government into cancelling their participation in a planned conference with PLO representatives which was due to take place in Amsterdam under the auspices of the Dutch "Pax Christi" organization. The government moves should also be seen in the general context of recent Israeli politics, such as the big right-wing campaign for the release of the members of the anti-Arab terrorist underground; and it no coincidence that at this same time that anti-democratic Emergency Regulations are used against the PLP, the government is also using such regulations to impose its economic austerity policy, sharply decreasing the real wages of workers. The struggle is far from lost: the suspension of M. K. Miari's immunity has not yet come into force, and there is a change that it will be repealed by The Supreme Court: Knesset Speaker Shlomo Hillel, who is a hawk, but is considered an honest man, came out against the removal of Miari's immunity; and none of the proposed bills has yet been enacted into law. Nevertheless, the situation is extremely serious. **WE FACE HEAVY ODDS IN A VERY HARD STRUGGLE AND NEED YOUR HELP AND SOLIDARITY.** We ask you to send protest letters and/or telegrams to the nearest Israeli Embassy of Consulate and to: Mr. Shimon Peres, Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Israel; with copies to P.O.B. 956, Tel Aviv, Israel.

The Text of the Proposed Anti-Peace Law

The government's proposed Anti-Peace Law is in the form of an amendment to the 1948 "Anti-Terrorist Act", adding a new category of people liable to imprisonment under this act, besides the existing categories that include members of a "terrorist organization" and those who "identify themselves with a terrorist organization" (that is how the flying of the Palestinian flag is defined). The new category includes a "citizen or resident of Israel who, knowingly and without lawful authority, makes contact, in Israel or abroad, with a person who is a member of the executive, the council or any other such body of a terrorist organization, or who is an official representative of a terrorist organization." (The definition of a "terrorist organization" is left to the Defence Minister, who long ago officially defined the PLO as a "terrorist organization" for purposes of this law.) The government's explanatory notes, appended to the proposed bill, read "Recently, contacts of Israelis with activists and official representatives of terrorist organizations have grown both numerous and frequent. This phenomenon is causing Israel serious harm, both politically and security-wise, and cannot be tolerated. Therefore, we propose to outlaw such contacts, if held knowingly and without lawful authority, by amending the 1948 Anti-Terrorist Act in such a way that the offender will be liable to up to three years imprisonment or to the fine fixed by law".