

# The Other Israel

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for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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## NO PEACE—WITHOUT THE PLO

Events are moving at a dramatic pace. Though no one can say with any certainty where developments are leading, at the time of writing (mid. Nov) the following picture seems to be emerging among the chief protagonists in the drama.

Israel's underlying objective — a bi-partisan policy of Labor and Likud — is to disqualify the PLO as the legitimate partner in any negotiations and in whatever framework, whether in the context of an international forum or otherwise. Labor and Likud's denial of the elementary human and national rights of the Palestinian people, and their refusal to implement a complete withdrawal from the Occupied Territories is the bottom line, the basic reason for Israel's rejections to deal with the PLO. Israel's acceptance, under strict conditions, of an international forum to initiate negotiations is in the words of Prime Minister Peres, the price that Israel may have to pay in order to remove the PLO from the political process.

With the PLO in the picture, any Israeli government, whether the current coalition or one formed by Labor, would have to make significant territorial concessions. However, with Jordan, Labor leaders may believe that they have a better chance of retaining a portion of the territories. (This is the gist of the Labor party programme called "territorial compromise", and also known as the "Jordanian Option"). Mr. Peres' proposal to King Hussein, to share power (Condominium) in the Occupied Territories, is a good example of the Labor leaders' frame of mind. In terms of this offer, Israel would control the settlement region (about 40 to 50 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip) and the King together with local Palestinian residents would control the rest. Nothing was said about whether the government would freeze settlement, but even more important, nothing was mentioned regarding control of the Occupied Territories after this intermediary period of power-sharing. In other words, even if Hussein was tempted by Peres' offers, he was given no guarantees of Israel's eventual and complete withdrawal.

Prime Minister Peres is aware that complete withdrawal is Hussein's (Arafat's and Syrian Assad's) minimum demand. In the late sixties and early seventies when, theoretically at least, a separate peace between Israel and Hussein, without the PLO, might have been possible, Labor government leaders refused. Peres and Rabin, among others, rejected Hussein's offer: peace in exchange for territories.

Nothing has changed since then.

None the less, Labor party leaders may still be deluding themselves that the monarch will finally succumb and make some sort of "deal". And in the event that the King does not oblige, at least this period of prenegotiations may extend for an indefinite period of time, Israel's public image abroad may improve and then anything can happen. In other words, Labor leaders believe that they have nothing to lose as long as the PLO is not a party to any negotiations. Peres' insistence on excluding the PLO has also neutralized his conditional acceptance of an international forum, because without the participation of the PLO in one way or another there is little likelihood of an international conference taking place.

Though Mr. Peres' principles for negotiations (UN address, October 22) are well within Israel's national consensus — No to a complete withdrawal; No to negotiations with the PLO; No to a Palestinian State — his conditional acceptance of an international forum is now becoming a major bone of contention between the coalition partners, which is precisely what Labor leaders hoped for. With less than a year to go before Peres is due to be replaced by Likud head Yitzhak Shamir — according to the rotation agreement — the Labor party is doing its utmost to force the Likud to quit the government. The religious parties, Labor's traditional coalition partners until their link with Likud in 1977, have become disenchanted with the latter's inability to make good on promises to pass religious legislation. Always available for hire, the religious parties are giving serious indications that if the Likud leaves the government over the issue of the international forum, they will remain. New elections would not be necessary and Labor together with the support of some of the opposition (Mapam, Civil Rights Movement) could form a government. In order to encourage these developments, there have been leaks to the press from the Prime Minister's office, to the effect that Peres offers Hussein joint sovereignty (Condominium) and suggestions that Jordan supply West Bank with electricity and so on.

All of these may be true and they are driving the Right, including the Likud Bloc, up the wall as they categorically refuse to budge an inch from the Occupied Territories. Overtures to Hussein, let alone to the PLO, are for Israel's Right a *casus belli*. In fact at the time of writing, the ultra right Gush Emunim





settlers' Movement has threatened civil war if any of the territories are returned. Likud leaders, Arik Sharon (Minister of Commerce and Industry) and David Levy (Minister of Construction and Housing), are at the moment enmeshed in an inner party struggle against Likud head Shamir for leadership of the party. Like Labor leader Peres, Sharon and Levy have their own reasons for not wanting the rotation agreement to be implemented (as Prime Minister, Shamir's hold on the party would be unquestionably strengthened).

It is in the context of the imminent rotation agreement (less than a year), strife between Labor and Likud and the power struggle within Likud, that Peres' political moves should be perceived.



Between the two alternatives open to the Jordanian Monarch, Labor or Likud, prospects for talks with Labor within the framework of an International Peace Conference – the only forum capable of compelling Israel to implement a complete withdrawal – looks relatively more promising. Though there are deep political differences between Hussein and Peres on almost every issue, the chief one being the question of complete withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, the Monarch is unquestionably creating the impression that he and Peres are enjoying a certain degree of rapport, a development which may force the Likud to leave the government, if it continues. Hussein is aware that the situation in the Occupied Territories is becoming urgent, not so much for the sake of the Palestinians – there was never any love lost between them – as for his own.

The monarch believes that escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will inevitably lead at some stage to mass deportations of Palestinians from the West Bank to the East Bank (Jordan). Such a development would force the King to go to war with Israel, which is something Israel's right-wingers hope for. (Sharon has challenged Hussein's legitimacy for years, claiming that Jordan is the Palestinian State). With the depressing prospect that Likud head Shamir might become Prime Minister in less than a year, and the sinister threat of mass expulsion of Palestinians looming in the future, King Hussein together with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, embarked on their peace initiative of February 1985.

Hussein may have preferred to negotiate for the Occupied Territories alone, but he certainly cannot do it now, when the PLO has gained the recognition of almost the entire international community as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. (The Arab world recognized it as such at the Arab Summit Meeting in Rabat, 1974).

What is true for the world is even truer for the inhabitants of the Occupied Territories who, together with Israel, are the chief parties to the conflict. In the only democratic elections held in the West Bank and Gaza in 1976, PLO candidates received an overwhelming majority of the votes. All of them have since then been deposed or deported.

Even traditional pro-Jordanian leaders in the Occupied Territories, such as Rashad Ash-Shawa (mayor of Gaza, deposed 1981); Elias Freij (mayor of Bethlehem); and Anwar Nusseiba have acclaimed publicly (at the time of writing) the PLO as the Palestinian People's sole representative. There is therefore no possible way in which the PLO can be forced out of the picture, especially when there is no reason to believe that even if he wanted to, Hussein could do it. Every move that Hussein makes in connection with the Occupied Territories will certainly need a mandate from the PLO, whether openly or tacitly. That however does not mean that the Monarch has closed all his diplomatic options.

The recent Jordanian-Syrian rapprochement (state visits by Jordanian Premier to Syria; Hussein invites Assad, Hussein clamps down on exiled Syrian opposition in Jordan) is a significant political development. Assad's fears that Jordan is considering a separate peace agreement have in the meantime already been allayed. Furthermore, there is little doubt that Syria's patron, the Soviet Union, has been encouraging Assad to participate in any political process which might develop and this explains his move towards Jordan. Hussein's rapprochement with Assad has thus given him an extremely strong card in his efforts to force Arafat to sing to the his tune. Although there is little chance of Hussein commencing negotiations on the Occupied Territories without PLO consent, the King intends to be first among equals in the joint Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative (Hussein-Arafat agreement, Feb. 1985).

Taking advantage of the fierce antagonism between Arafat and Assad since 1982, Jordan is using its newly established amicable relationship with Syria to pressure Arafat to accept UN resolutions 242 and 338, adopted respectively in 1967 and 1973. Both resolutions stipulate an Israeli withdrawal from Occupied Territories and recognition of Israel. The PLO's underlying and politically understandable difficulty with UN resolutions 242 and 338 is that the resolutions perceive the Palestinian problem to be one of refugees only and not one of the Palestinian People as a collective entity. This poses less difficulties for Hussein and Assad, given that the provisions of the UN resolutions call for an Israeli withdrawal.

There is little doubt that of all the parties currently participating in the drama, the PLO has been pressured to make the major concessions. At the time of writing it is still an open question whether or not the organization will accept the resolutions explicitly.

By the time our readers receive this newsletter, the Reagan – Gorbachev Summit meeting (Nov. 19) will be history. If the two leaders reach an understanding on the Middle East, chances for convening an international conference on the Middle East will be enhanced.

Given that neither Labor nor Likud – considering their record during eighteen years of occupation – will withdraw from the Occupied





*Territories and recognize Palestinian National rights of their own free will, and given that the US support of Israel has been uncritical, concerted pressure by the international community to compel Israel to withdraw and to recognize Palestinian national rights has at this stage of the conflict, become a vital necessity. The alternative to peace in this region is war. We are at the crossroads.*

The Editor

## The dialogue continues – Uri Avnery meets representative of PLO

With the Larnaka (Sept. 25), Tunisia (Oct. 1) and Achille Lauro (Oct. 7-12) affairs in the background, Mr. Uri Avnery – Co-Chairman of the Executive of the Progressive List for Peace and long time activist in Israel's Peace Movement – participated in a joint press conference with PLO representative in Italy, Fuad al-Bittar.

Mr. Uri Avnery was invited to Italy by Demokracia Proletaria, a small but very influential neutralist party, whose roots go back to the student movements of the 60's, and which is equally critical of the US and the Soviet Union.

On the 18th of October, the day after the fall of the Italian government, Mr. Avnery's hosts convened a press conference in Rome for him and Mr. Fuad al-Bittar.

Italy's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – so striking during the Achille Lauro affair, when it caused the fall of the Italian government – transformed the press conference into a major political event. More than one hundred local and foreign journalists, including a half dozen from Israel, packed the Foreign Press Club in Rome. One of Italy's leading radio stations transmitted the press conference live, translating simultaneously from English and Arabic into Italian. However, though Israeli journalists were at the conference and even made a point of asking provocative questions, nothing was published in the Israeli press. It is possible that they did not send in their reports, or if they did that the editors back home may have basked them. Whatever may have been the case, it was a clear and blatant conspiracy of silence for the purpose of preventing Israel's general public from knowing that the activists in Israel's peace movement are as committed as ever to continue the dialogue with the PLO, the Palestinian People's legitimate and sole representative.

Mr. Avnery was the opening speaker at the conference, and his major points were:

● The murder at Larnaka (September 25) and the murder of the Jewish passenger on the Italian cruiser (Oct. 7-12) are deplorable crimes. There is no doubt that its perpetrators sought to undermine the Arafat-Hussein peace initiative, which precisely then began to gain momentum. (British Foreign Minister was to meet PLO delegates in London on October

14; Presidium of European Common Market was to meet the same delegation immediately afterwards; and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was to address the UN General Assembly).

● There is an automatic collaboration between extremists on both sides – the Palestinian terrorists who commit these kinds of crimes and the forces in Israel who reject the return of the Occupied Territories. This collaboration will have catastrophic results for the Palestinians, for Israel and for the cause of peace.

● When the excitement over the recent events passes, it will be realised that nothing has changed in the basics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel exists and it will continue to do so. The Palestinian People exist and they will continue to do so. Talks between both parties is the only way to achieve peace.

● In all negotiations Israel will be represented by its government, whether one likes it or not. The Palestinians will be represented by the PLO, whether one likes it or not.

There cannot be any meaningful negotiations without the PLO and no peace agreement will be worth the paper on which it is written, if the leadership of one of the parties to the conflict has not signed it.

● Recent events clearly indicate that it is impossible to proceed with the peace process in an atmosphere of mutual terror, which fires emotions and produces a climate of hatred and anger. For a number of terrorists, that is all that is needed in order to hamper the peace initiative, built up so painstakingly for years.

Mr. Avnery concluded his opening remarks with the following proposal.

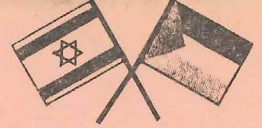
"I propose to the PLO leadership to consider a moratorium on violence, to cease all acts of hostilities for a specific period of time – possibly a half a year or a year – in order to allow the peace initiative to gain momentum.

I propose to the PLO leadership to compel all groups in the PLO to cease acts of violence and to make it unequivocally clear to the entire world that those who continue with these operations are not members of the PLO. It is essential to terminate the uncertainty regarding the political identity of those responsible for the attacks, such as in Larnaka, Cyprus.

Simultaneously, I propose to the groups active in Israel's Peace Movement to demand of our government to cease all acts of hostilities against the Palestinians, including the policy of settlements – and this too for the same specific period of time".

PLO representative, Fuad al-Bittar speaking after Mr. Avnery, denounced in no uncertain terms all acts of terror. He said that although Abd al-Abbas is a member of the PLO's Executive Council, the small splinter organization which he heads opposes the PLO's official policy. Israel's and American's intransigent refusal to recognize Palestinian national rights, and operations such as the bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunis, are driving the Palestinians to despair. Though Mr. Bittar was





unqualified to respond positively to Mr. Avnery's proposal calling for a moratorium on acts of hostilities, he left the distinct impression that the proposals would be forwarded to his superiors.

PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat, has in the meantime (Nov. 7) made a public statement to that effect, following a round of talks held between Mr. Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The PLO Chairman declared that the PLO denounces "all acts of terror against civilians". This decision continues the statement, obligates all the groups and tendencies in the PLO, and from today (Nov. 7) anyone, says the statement, who will not abide by it, will be severely punished.

With the Anti-Peace Law still not being an official law of the land – it yet has to reach the Knesset floor for its second and final third reading and vote – no court measures were taken against Mr. Avnery on his return to the country. According to the Anti-Peace Law (*See Other Israel, No. 17*) unauthorized contact by Israelis with representatives of the PLO are to be punishable by three years imprisonment. At the time of writing (mid. November) the law after receiving a majority vote in its first reading in Knesset (Sept.) has returned to the Knesset's Committee for Constitutional, Legal and Juridical affairs for possible further changes in its wording. The Committee's head, Elie Kulas, member of the right-wing Likud, declared recently that the Bill will return to the Knesset floor for its second and final third reading within a month. Needless to say, the peace movement is anxiously awaiting further developments. It has become clear to all of us that once the Anti-Peace Law becomes official, ways and means of legally circumventing it will have to be found. Continuing the dialogue with the PLO is just too important, and the quest for peace too serious a matter for it to be checked by this abominable Anti-Peace Law.

## Chronicles of the Peace Struggle

Activities of the Peace Movement from Oct. 7 (our last entry) are not reported because of lack of space. In our next issue we will comment on the character and significance of the current struggle against Kahane's movement.

22/9 – The largest anti-racist mobilisation in Israeli history took place in Givatayim, a suburb of Tel-Aviv, where about 20,000 people turned out to protest against a rally held by the racist rabbi Kahane.

Givatayim is a traditional bastion of the Labor party, which controls the local municipality and the local branch of the Histadrut trade-union.

Until August 1985, Givatayim mayor, Yitzhak Yaron, was an obscure labor politician, little known outside his own town. He received deserved national fame when rabbi Kahane first attempted to hold a racist rally in Givatayim, on August 12th, (*See No. 17, p. 4*).

However Kahane did not give up easily. He

scheduled another rally in Givatayim, for September 22th. With the date known weeks in advance, about 20,000 anti-racist demonstrators turned out. Once again labor youth movements were predominant.

About 1,000 policemen, most of them from the "Border Guards", a unit notorious for violently dispersing demonstrators in the Occupied Territories, established a heavy cordon, preventing the anti-racist demonstrators from nearing the tribune, around which about 300 members of Kahane's racist movement clustered. When Kahane's car appeared, its windshield was smashed, and a large number of policemen conveyed him through the raging but non-violent crowd.

Kahane's speech was carried over four powerful loudspeakers, but hardly a word was heard amid the shouts of "Nazi-get out!" and the loud whistles emitted by the crowd. The police brutally pushed back demonstrators who attempted to move forward.

Kahane, furious, threatened to "raze Givatayim and completely destroy it", an extreme statement even for him.

– Since his brother's death in the Lebanon War Ehud Shpiegel a young man in his twenties, has been extremely active in the Peace Movement. In the traditional annual commemoration gatherings for Israel's fallen paratroopers, in which the bereaved families participate, Mr. Shpiegel interrupted the Prime Minister's speech, demanded a national inquiry into the Lebanon War and accused Peres of being just as responsible for the Lebanon War as the Likud. (Labor's representatives in the Knesset voted for the invasion of Lebanon in June 1982).

23/9 – A short five minute film dealing with racist Meir Kahane, produced, written, directed and acted by activists in the poverty stricken areas of Jerusalem, was shown on television. Kahane is depicted as a madman, one of many, hospitalized in an insane asylum. Whereas at the beginning Kahane is ridiculed by the other patients, he soon succeeds in convincing his fellow inmates to attack the Knesset and even the doctor's and nurses are seen joining the crowd.

The film is to be shown in cultural centers of Israel's development towns, where most of Kahane's sympathisers live. The film acquires greater credibility in that the film's producers come from the same social-economic milieu as Kahane's supporters – slum areas in Israel's major cities similar to development towns, most of which were established in the fifties to accommodate Jewish immigrants from the Arab countries of North Africa. Whereas about 8 percent of Israel's workers are unemployed, 30 percent of the unemployed live in development towns. About 10 percent of Israel's Jewish population governments channeled funds to these regions instead of the settlements in the Occupied Territories, Kahane would have never made such significant gains within this segment of Israel's population.

24/9 – "Response", a new umbrella organization was formed to coordinate the struggle against racism and Kahane.





— The trial of poet Yitzhak Laor (*See Other Israel No. 16*), accused by police of assaulting a policeman when he participated in the first demonstration against the Lebanon War — two days after its outbreak (8.6.82) — has finally come to an end. Mr. Laor was acquitted of all charges. The judge was convinced by the material evidence which the defense presented — pictures taken by the photographer for Tel-Aviv's widely read local paper called "The City" — which showed that whatever violence occurred at the demonstration was perpetrated by the police.

1/10 — Knesset Member Matti Peled of the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), today accused the Israeli government of initiating the bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis in order to destroy the Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative. MK Peled said that Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir mutually agree that the peace initiative is undesirable and they will use any means including an attack on Tunisia — the most consistent supporter of peace among the Arab countries — to bury it.

"There is only one way of breaking the vicious circle" said, Mr. Peled "That is the way of peace, of mutual recognition between the State of Israel and the PLO, the Palestinian People's representative. This door is now open, and if Israel's leaders close it by causing the failure of the Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative, they will be responsible for the resulting bloodshed".

— Approximately 500 members of the local Labor youth movement in the city of Rishon Le-Zion (twenty minutes drive from Tel-Aviv) demonstrated against Kahane's rally in the city. Kahane's supporters were significantly outnumbered. The several hundred teenagers blew whistles and yelled "Kahane go home".

6/10 — A Jewish-Arab artist exhibition opened in the Arab village of Um-el Fahm (North of Israel).

— Approximately 2,500 people from all parts of the country participated in a Jewish-Arab gathering which took place on the outskirts of the Arab village of Kara (Central Israel, in the region known as the Little Triangle where a large number of Israel's 700,000 Arab citizens live). The event was organized by the Movement for Co-Existence and against Racism and Mapam (Former member of Labor Alignment, broke away when the Labor Party formed a coalition government with Likud Bloc). Dr. Sami Mar'i sociologist at Haifa University addressing the gathering said: "No human society is immune against racism, against the negation of his fellow man and the perception of him as sub-human". Several of Israel's leading authors — Yoram Kaniuk and Alef Bet Yehoshua — condemned the occupation and spoke for the recognition of Palestinian national rights. Mohammed Massarwa, Kara village head, spoke likewise.

7/10 — Members of the group "Down with the Occupation", visited Bassam Shaka, the deposed mayor of Nablus (West Bank) and a crippled victim of a Jewish terrorist underground attack in June 1980. They thus expressed their solidarity with the town's inhabitants.

## International Peace Conference

The NGO's (non governmental organization) Second International Conference, held in Geneva, September 9-12, sought to advance the idea of convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East (*See Other Israel, No. 17*). Sponsored by the UN, the NGO's conference was part of a much larger campaign aimed at gaining world public opinion to support such a Conference, in which all the interested parties to the Israeli-Arab conflict would participate: the two super-powers, Israel, the PLO and other interested parties.

We present below excerpts from an address delivered by Shafiq Al-Hout, representative of the PLO at the NGO conference, in Geneva, on Sept. 10.

"The idea of convening an "International Peace Conference" on the "Question of Palestine", which has been adopted and declared at the "Geneva International Conference on the Question of Palestine" on 7 September 1983, and which was, later on, on 13 December 1983 endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, as resolution 38/58C, in fact the coronation of noble, responsible, sincere and painstaking efforts of the large majority of the international community.

... The concurrent use of "the right of veto" by the United States of America in the Security Council against all the balanced and just draft resolutions relevant to the Question of Palestine has paralysed all international efforts made within the United Nations framework seeking a just, comprehensive settlement for this Question. This, in reality, was the major reason for the emergence of the idea calling for an international peace conference, hoping to find new horizons and dimensions of international efforts searching for new platforms capable of finding and implementing what the Security Council has failed to conclude. Now, whether this international conference will be a substitute or an extension of the Security Council, is still unknown.

... It is necessary to refer, in this regard, to two provisions of paragraph 3, namely subparagraph (a) and subparagraph (f), which constitute the two major wings of the balance, in the whole political substance submitted before the conference in its search for the just and durable solution.

Subparagraph (a) states:

"The attainment by the Palestinian People of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine".

... Subparagraph (f) constitute the other wing of the balance when it states: "The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the *sine qua non* of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinian People as stated in subparagraph (a)".

... Now, what more than the right to exist in





peace and security with internationally recognized boundaries, does Israel want and need? Is not that what all States of this world enjoy and are keen to preserve?

... At this point of this historical era, the Palestinian leadership has been able to see through the political and strategical realities of this world, and to develop accordingly by the courage to sacrifice some of its people's ideals and principles for the sake of peace and a pragmatic settlement.

It would be only unwise and very unfortunate if the United States of America and Israel did not grab this life-chance opportunity and meet such a move negatively.

... It is high time for Israel to realize that power can never be the monopoly of one State or party. A great deal of the Arabs are recognizing more and more the necessity to regulate the balance of power in the area. Tremendous efforts have been paid lately in that direction. And it might be wise as well, if the Israeli leadership realizes - what the Arabs have already realized - that none of the parties involved in the Middle East conflict can impose its policies all the way and forever in the presence of the two super-powers and their global strategies.

... Finishing the examination of the political substance of the conference leads to the examination of another, related to the list of participants in the conference. Here again, we shall find what will testify for the sincerity and seriousness of this conference for the achievement of its objective.

Paragraph 4 of resolution 38/58C states:

"Invites all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States, to participate in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East' on equal footing and

with equal rights".

... The United States of America, being a super-power, and Israel, being a party involved in the conflict, make their participation indispensable for the convening of the conference.

... The United States of America-Israeli objection to the participation of PLO reveals ignorance and failure: ignorance of facts and failure to deal with realities. The fact that the PLO and none but the PLO represents the Palestinian People is not questionable. Six years of hard search by Israel and the United States of America to find a substitute for the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza Strip passed in vain. All measures of terror and temptation failed to find one Palestinian individual to doubt the PLO's sole legitimate representation of the Palestinian People.

The United States of America-Israeli objection to the PLO's participation in the conference is nothing but a pretext behind which stands their real reason, which is rejection to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People. Such a position reveals, as well, the two allied State's failure to face any proposed initiative for a comprehensive solution that deals with all aspects of the Question of Palestine.

... Finally, all those among us who have witnessed and outlived the last two world wars in this century can testify strongly that these two wars could have possibly been avoided if the international mind and conscience knew how to stand firmly against the accumulating reasons that led to them. There is nothing that can bring balance needed to produce a just and durable solution as the international action.

Let us hope and work for the success of the "International Peace Conference", the implementation of which would be an international victory against the threat of a third world war".

## Mohammed Mi'ari — head of Progressive List for Peace — stripped of Knesset immunities!

On the second day of the opening of the Knesset's winter session (October 15), PLP head Mohammed Mi'ari was stripped of three Knesset

immunities: an MK's privileged access to places closed to the public; an MK's immunity against arrest; and an MK's immunity against search. All of the right-wing parties including several Labor Alignment MK's voted for the limitations. The final vote showed 39 MK's supporting the move and 22 against it. Most of the Labor MK's were not present

### Letter of Solidarity with Mohammed Mi'ari From Léopold Sédar Senghor

28 August, 1985

Mr. Deputy,

When returning from Senegal, I found your and Mr. Matti Peled's letter of July 22, 1985. I completely share your ideas and sentiments. Likewise, as you undoubtedly know, the "Interafricaine Socialiste", of which I am head, favours a conference with Israelis and Palestinians under auspices of the UN.

I believe that we should not despair. In the "International Socialiste" we have contact with Prime Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, as well as with the PLO and the King of Jordan.

Mr. Deputy, please accept my cordial respect.

Léopold Sédar Senghor





in Knesset, including Abba Eban and Yitzhak Navon (former President of Israel) who for some strange and inexplicable reason are considered to be political "doves".

The proposal to lift Mohammed Mi'ari's Knesset immunities was presented to the Knesset House Committee by one of its right-wing members (Herut-Likud), Michael Eitan. On June 11, by a vote of 14 to 6, the Committee accepted the motion to suspend Mr. Mi'ari's immunities. Mr. Mi'ari was formally accused of being "involved in a series of incidences undermining the security and democratic character of the State, which reached its climax in the solidarity meeting for Kawasmeh and Arafat, held at El-Ibrahama College (East Jerusalem) on February 22, 1985".

Mr. Mi'ari did in fact participate in the meeting, but so did about three thousand other people, including right-winger Michael Eitan, a new Knesset member who has like many others been making a name for himself by riding the wave of anti-Arab feelings in the country. Eitan has adopted the mantle of policeman and informer, appearing at public gatherings sponsored by groups and parties identified with the Palestinian cause. Several months ago he showed up and took copious notes at a joint Jewish-Arab meeting in Nazareth, sponsored by the PLP. The gathering at El-Ibrahama College in East Jerusalem was held in commemoration of Fahd Kawasmeh, a former mayor of Hebron (West Bank), and political moderate, who precisely because of his moderacy (he called for mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition) was deported by Israel in 1980-together with Mohammed Milhem, mayor of Halhul, (West Bank) and religious leader Sheich Tamimi - and later assassinated by the extremist Abu Nidal group in December 1984. (Issam Sartawi for years a leading Palestinian protagonist for Israeli-PLO dialogue was assassinated by the same group a year and a half earlier, in April 1983). Eitan, in his eyewitness report before the Knesset's House Committee, claimed that the gathering in East Jerusalem was a meeting expressing solidarity with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the latter's portraits hanging behind the speaker's platform were presented as proof. It was an absurd accusation. Arafat's pictures are to be seen in almost every public institution in the Occupied Territories. Speakers at the gathering, including Mohammed Mi'ari, called for Israel-PLO dialogue,



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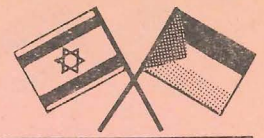
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Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories and a mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition of each others national rights. The meeting at El-Ibrahama College was public and scrutinized by the police, who did not interfere at any stage of the meeting. None of the speakers, including Mi'ari, was brought in for questioning afterwards and of course none of the 3,000 participants Jews and Arabs, were accused or charged with committing any sort of crime.

Right-winger Eitan's allegations that Mi'ari's participation in the meeting in East Jerusalem was subversive, contradicted the facts, defied elementary logic, and was generally so absurd that there was little likelihood that the Knesset House Committee would vote to lift Mi'ari's Knesset immunities on those charges. However, the opportunity to strike at Mi'ari and the Progressive List for Peace – which has been a prime target for attacks by Israel's Right and Labor since the birth of the Jewish-Arab, Arab-Jewish List on the eve of the last general elections (June 1984) – was not to be missed. Discussions in the Knesset House Committee immediately turned to a completely different topic – PLO "terror" and Mr. Mi'ari's attitude towards it. It is interesting to note that Committee member Yossi Sarid, leader of the left-of-center Civil Rights Movement, a moderate political party (4 MK's), advocating Israeli-Palestinian co-existence, but not specifically Israeli-PLO dialogue, opened the door for the pack of Likud and Labor wolves in the Committee to pounce on Mr. Mi'ari.

Turning to Mohammed Mi'ari Yossi Sarid asked him to denounce PLO terror, an action which in Sarid's view would satisfy the Committee members and close the "case". Mi'ari complied, denouncing acts of terror by all parties, whether committed by the Palestinians or by Israel.

On October 15, when the majority of the Knesset voted to lift his immunities, Mi'ari repeated his and the PLP's position on the question of terror (. . .) "I denounce all acts of terror and I denounce all attacks against innocent people – these are not mere words. I know that we are speaking about a specific conflict, and I therefore add – whether committed by Palestinians, or by Israeli citizens by groups or by the State of Israel. . . I denounce the attack in Larnaka Cyprus. . . I denounce the bombing in Tunis. . . I denounce terror on both sides, whether by the Palestinian side when it attacks innocents, or by the Israeli side – whether by members of the Jewish Terrorist Underground (*See Other Israel No. 16*) or by the State of Israel and its Air Force, when it bombs Tunis and kills innocent people. . ."

Mi'ari's principled position against terror did not, apparently, satisfy members of the House

Committee in June, nor the Knesset in October. Members of the Right and the majority of the Labor party demanded that Mi'ari denounce the PLO and nothing more. Several Labor members in the Committee proposed a compromise formula – denunciation of the PLO and the Jewish Terrorist underground. Mi'ari and the PLP understandably rejected the proposal to exclude denunciation of acts of terror by the State – such as bombings by Israel's Air Force, in which there are almost always civilian casualties. This left the door open for suspension of Mi'ari's Knesset immunities. Not even against the Israeli Nazi prototype, Meir Kahane, did the Knesset act in this manner, when the Knesset floor suspended his freedom of travel within the country several months earlier, only after he had begun paying "visits" to Arab towns and villages in Israel calling on their inhabitants to pack their bags and leave the country.

The Knesset vote against Mi'ari was one of a series of messages (The ANTI-PEACE LAW) from the Right and the majority in the Labor party that the consensus of Labor and Likud reject the legitimacy of the political views espoused by Mi'ari and the Progressive List for Peace. Those principles can be summed up in four major political tenets: Negotiations with the PLO; Israeli withdrawal to the borders of 1967; Establishment of a Palestinian State alongside Israel; and complete equality of Jews and Arabs living in Israel. However, in addition to the attack on the PLP's political programme, the Knesset lifted Mi'ari's immunities because he is a Palestinian-Arab, a citizen of Israel- the Arab head of a joint Jewish-Arab, Arab-Jewish List. This fact has made him anathema to the Right and the majority in the Labor party. The Jewish members of the PLP espouse exactly the same political positions as Mr. Mi'ari and the his attitudes towards terror are also theirs. Yet PLP MK Matti Peled continues to enjoy Knesset immunities, at least for now. Clearly blatant racism lies behind the actions against the PLP head, a testament to the discriminatory policies still practiced to this day in Israel against its 700,000 Palestinian-Arab citizens, a fact, which is inseparable from Labor and Likud's continuing refusal to recognize the most elementary human and national rights of the Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories.

At the time of writing, (Nov, 15) we are still waiting for the Supreme Court's decision, regarding the legality of the Knesset vote. The Progressive List for Peace, represented by Advocate Joseph Bard, took the case to the Supreme Court immediately following the suspension of Mr. Mi'ari's immunities. We shall post our readers of further developments.

## TEN YEARS TO THE ICIPP

THE ISRAELI COUNCIL FOR ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE (ICIPP) will commemorate in December, ten years to its founding.

In honor of that occasion we are planning to hold a Symposium on the topic: **The Role of Informal Contacts Between Israelis and Palestinians.**