

The Other Israel

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ON THE EDGE

"The Other Israel" resumes regular publication at a critical period for Israel and the entire Middle East. Shimon Peres has yielded the Prime Minister's post to Itzhak Shamir of the right-wing Likud. During his two years in office, Peres has proved himself completely unworthy of the credit which many Israelis (including the moderate part of the Israeli peace movement) were willing to extend to him. During his trips around the world, Peres performed many feats of public relations, but did not make a single step genuinely furthering Israeli-Palestinian peace. Rather, his efforts were directed at cementing an alliance with King Hussein of Jordan, aimed at jointly oppressing the West Bank Palestinians.

In this Peres did achieve some success, as evident in recent moves on the West Bank, such as the appointment by the Israeli authorities of pro-Jordanian mayors in several West-Bank towns, or the expulsion order against Akram Haniyeh, editor of the *A-Sha'ab* newspaper in East Jerusalem, who is a firm opponent of both the Israeli occupation and the Hashemite Monarchy. However, an Israeli-Jordanian alliance against the Palestinians, far from furthering the cause of peace, can only bring more bloodshed and suffering. The

growing number of bloody attacks by desperate Palestinians, which are used by Israeli racists to foment violent anti-Arab riots, clearly show the depth of the abyss into which the Middle East may soon plunge.

Part of the heritage which Peres leaves to his successor is the Anti-Peace Law, making contacts of Israelis with PLO representatives a criminal offence. The passage of this law was put off again and again, for over a year; but finally, it was enacted by the Knesset on August 6, 1986. This law was initiated by the Likud; but it would never have been enacted without the cooperation of Shimon Peres and other Labor leaders.

The initiators of the Anti-Peace Law had hoped to banish the specter of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. In this they utterly failed; the very passage of the law caused members of the peace movement to declare themselves all the more willing to engage in dialogue, and even to face trial and imprisonment, if need be.

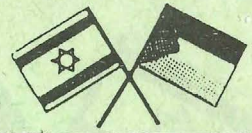
The Israeli peace movement is now entering one of the most crucial periods in its history. With the help and solidarity of our friends abroad, the cause of peace will emerge victorious.

The Editor

STOP PRESS!

On November 6, 1986, a group of Israelis met with a PLO delegation at Costinesti, Rumania.

Upon returning to Israel, four of the participants were interrogated by the police; they claimed that they had not violated the recently passed anti-Peace Law, since the meeting, in the context of an international symposium hosted by the Rumanian Writers' Union, was not the kind of meeting defined and prohibited by that law. The decision whether or not to press criminal charges against them officially rests with Attorney-General Charish; probably, the real decision will be taken at the ministerial level, out of political - rather than juridical - considerations. Further details will be published in the next issue.



The history of two shameful laws

The following is a chapter from the book "Terrible Days - Social Divisions and Political Paradoxes in Israel", by Adam Keller, due to appear on January 1987¹. It describes the way in which the Anti-Peace Law and the so-called "Anti-Racist Law" were conceived and enacted.

In street action, the Israeli anti-racist movement had impressive successes, in mobilizing thousands of demonstrators and in radicalizing wide sections of the public. In particular, the Labor-affiliated youth movements, which since the 1950's had been little more than social clubs, were strongly politicized by the anti-racist struggle.

Yet, when the anti-racist movement attempted to transfer these achievements to the realm of parliamentary politics, by the enactment of an anti-racist law, it had run up against the inherent contradictions of the Israeli political system. The National Unity Government assumed power in August 1984, at the height of public agitation following Kahane's election to the Knesset. The government undertook to enact an anti-racism law. On November 19, 1984, Prime Minister Shimon Peres informed members of the International Journalists' Federation, who were visiting Jerusalem at the time, that "in the very near future the State of Israel will have a law against racism". Government Ministers of both Labor and Likud competed in condemning racism and stating that it must be uprooted. However, when it came to actually drafting the governmental anti-racist law, obstruction after obstruction appeared, and the scope of the proposed law steadily shrank.

From the first, the law dealt only with racist incitement, rather than with racist discrimination. Among other things, a law against discrimination would force the government to immediately dismantle the whole apparatus of the governmental Israel Lands Authority, whose main purpose is to keep most lands in Israel from being acquired by Arabs. (This purpose is openly admitted by its officials, who take pride in being "the guardians of Jewish Lands".)

The original draft, as approved by the cabinet in April 1985, stated: "Whoever makes public statements inciting to racism or with the intent to provoke racism shall be subject to two years' imprisonment"².

At this stage, the politics of balance, through which the removal of parliamentary immunity

from Kahane was "balanced" by a similar move against KM Muhammad Miari, got to work again. The Likud decided that the anti-racist law needed to be "balanced" by a law forbidding contacts with the PLO.

Since July 1982, when Uri Avnery met Yasser Arafat in besieged West Beirut, the scope of meetings between Israelis and Palestinians had widened, both on the Israeli and on the Palestinian side, beyond the veterans who originally pioneered this dialogue.

In March 1983 a meeting took place in Budapest between Abu-Iyad, Arafat's deputy, and an Israeli delegation that included, among others, Labor member Chana Zemer, editor of the Histadrut daily "Davar", and Mordechai Bar-On, a member of Peace Now (both present in a private capacity, not officially representing their respective organizations).

Bar-On also went on a month's lecture tour in the U.S., jointly with deposed Halhul mayor Muhammad Milhem, who afterwards became a member of the PLO Central Committee.

In November 1984, Labor Arab KM Abd-el-Wahab Darawsha intended to go to Amman and address the PNC (Palestinian National Council), the PLO's parliament-in-exile. Because of premature disclosure in the media, his plan became known while he was still in Cyprus, waiting for a plane to Jordan; strong pressure was put on him by the Labor party leadership not to go, and the Jordanian government, under the eyes of the Arab World, then also opposed the visit.

Mordechai Bar-On, elected Knesset member for Ratz, participated in a meeting with Imad Shakur, Arafat's aide, together with three other Knesset Members, Yair Tzaban and Muhammad Wadat of Mapam, and Ora Namir of the Labor party. The meeting took place in March 1985 at St. Augustin, near Bonn, West Germany, in the context of a seminar organized by the Christian-Democrat Konrad Adenauer Fund.

There was also a change in broader Israel Public opinion: on May 1985, ha-Aretz published the results of a public opinion poll, conducted by the "Pori" Public Opinion Research Institute. This article stated that: "(...) 37 percent of the Israeli public now (May 1985) 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 was in response to these phenomena that Likud Justice Minister Nissim presented to the Knesset on July 1985 a bill which would make any "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" liable to three years imprisonment and/or a fine. The definition of "a terrorist organization" is left to the

1. It will be available from: Uitgeverij Cyprus, Heemraadschapslaan 33, 1181 TZ Amstelveen, Holland.

2. Quoted from "The Anti-racist Bill" by Roman Friester, ha-Aretz, May 2, 1986, translated by "News from Within", 14/E Koresh Street, Jerusalem.



Defense Minister, who long ago officially applied this definition to the PLO and all its affiliates.

The government's explanatory notes, appended to the proposed bill, read: "Recent 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.

Officially, the bill was named "anti-terrorist amendment act"; the nickname given to it, during the following controversy, was "The anti-Peace Law". The two laws, anti-racism and anti-peace, were made into Siamese twins, by the Labor-Likud "balancing" policy; Likud leaders decided to oppose the anti-racist law, unless their "anti-terrorist" law would be approved at the same time, since "terrorism is as much a danger as racism".

Shimon Peres was faced with a wave of protest from abroad, including from Labor's fellow members of the Socialist International; inside Labor itself, resistance was led by KM David Libai, who stated that "this law contradicts basic principles in the Penal Code and (. . .), has no parallel in other countries (. . .). It is anti-democratic, is meant to impose a political point of view, and is an obstacle to political dialogue whose aim is to bring peace to the region".

Peres had no intention to quarrel seriously with his Likud coalition partners, the sponsors of the anti-peace law. Finally he decided to support that law, after the Likud agreed to make a few slight changes in its wording³. KM Libai's proposed amendment, that punishment under the new law would be dependant on a proof that the contact had "encouraged terrorism", was rejected; this would have nullified the law's main intention, which is to prevent contacts aiming at peace between Israel and the PLO. At the beginning of 1986, the "twin" laws seemed about to pass the final parliamentary vote, which would place them on the Israeli law books. However, an unexpected complication arose: the religious parties suddenly took up a strong opposition to the anti-racist law. This was the result of sophisticated manoeuvres carried out by Meir Kahane.

To a large measure, Kahane's success derives from his ability to locate racist elements in the practice of the Israeli government and ruling parties and in these parties' ideologies, to separate such elements from all democratic or humanist elements, with which they are mixed by the establishment parties, and to take them to their logical conclusion. Thus, he had taken up the slogan "Judaization of the Galilee" which various Israeli governments have used in order to discriminate against Arabs in the Galilee, and the slogan "Hebrew Labor" under which the Histadrut violently opposed the employment of Arab workers

in the pre-'48 period.

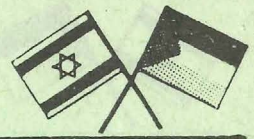
With even greater success, Kahane did the same with Orthodox Judaism, relying on his authority as a Rabbi (the authenticity of his title has been doubted, but it cannot be doubted that he has a thorough knowledge of Jewish religion). Kahane's biggest success was in using the taboo against mixed marriages, which is ingrained deeply in the Orthodox Jewish tradition, created throughout two millennia of diaspora life. Kahane attacked the Education Ministry's program of meetings between Jewish and Arab school children, as "leading to mixed marriages". This contention was accepted by the whole of the religious establishment and by all the religious parties. It was also accepted by the religious officials of the Education Ministry itself, who refused to implement the Minister's plan in the state-financed religious school system.

Kahane also compiled a collection of quotations from the Bible, the Talmud and other religious authorities, which support such contentions as that "the Jewish people is a chosen and superior people", or that it is a religious commandment to hate enemy soldiers and treat them pitilessly⁴. Of course, the authoritative sources of Judaism, created during several millennia, are wide enough to enable all ideologies to be proved by selective collection and interpretation; several collections counter to Kahane's have been compiled and published. However, the attitude taken by the religious parties towards the anti-racist law left little doubt as to which interpretation of Judaism is theirs. All the religious parties demanded strongly that the anti-racist proposal be changed, so that anything based on religion will be excluded from its application.

3. Quoted from a letter sent on August 17, 1986, to Latif Dori, Secretary of the Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, and read by Dori at a press conference in Jerusalem, August 20, 1986.

4. According to Peres' amendment, four categories of Israelis will be exempted from the application of the anti-Peace Law: Israeli citizens who are relatives of PLO members and who meet these relatives; Israelis whose relatives are held prisoner by the PLO and who meet PLO representatives in order to try to arrange the prisoners' release; Israeli journalists who participate in an international press conference with a PLO member, provided that members of international media are present and that no personal interview is given; and Israelis who participate in an international conference on scientific or cultural subjects in which a PLO member also participates, provided that no personal contact is made and that the conference does not deal with political matters.

5. "Know your (true) Judaism — a collection of sources edited by Rabbi Meir Kahane", published (in Hebrew) by the Kach movement, Jerusalem.



On February 23, 1986, the Chief Rabbis called on the leaders of the religious parties to block the passage of the anti-racist law, since it would outlaw the Chief Rabbis' ruling that a Jew should not sell an apartment to a gentile. The declaration by the Chief Rabbis that the bill would jeopardize the Halacha (Jewish Religious Law) accorded moral validity to Kahane's claim to base his racist slogans on that same religious law. In an effort to placate the religious parties, the wording of the proposed law was watered down, by changing "one who publishes incitement to racism" into "one who publishes something *with the intention* of inciting to racism". This already made the law almost impossible to enforce, but the religious parties were not satisfied, and continued to hold out for a complete exemption of any racist incitement based on religious writings.

Those Labor members who had pressed for an anti-racist law pointed out that accepting this demand would make the law devoid of all content; on the other hand, the Labor leadership did not want to anger the religious parties, whose support it hopes to gain for an eventual narrow government without the Likud. Therefore, Labor let the two linked laws, anti-racism and anti-peace, stay blocked. To make an anti-racist gesture, the government authorized the issuing of a new postage stamp with the slogan "no to racism!" on it.

In the next half year, several still-legal meetings of Israelis with representatives of the PLO continued to take place, in which both ICIPP members and other Israelis participated. Between June 29 and July 2, 1986, a large group of Oriental Jewish peace activists met with representatives of the PLO at a conference organized in Vienna under the auspices of the United Nations. On August 1, 1986, Yediot Aharonot, Israel's largest-circulation newspaper, published an interview with Yemini Ben-Dror, one of the Oriental participants in the Vienna meeting. The interview was given several pages in Yediot Aharonot's popular weekend supplement; it was prefaced by the words: "In June 1986, a meeting of Israelis with the PLO took place. The composition of the Israeli side is different (. . .) until now, such meetings were Ashkenazi territory. There was a stereotype that Sephardies are Arab-haters, open or disguised Kahanists; but this is not so".

On August 6, the Labor party suddenly decided to accept the religious parties' demand. The anti-racist bill was changed by the addition of a clause exempting from the law any material that "aims at preserving the character, uniqueness or worship of a religion, provided that this was not done with the object of inciting to racism". When the law in this form was brought to a vote, the parties who had initiated the idea of an anti-racist law voted against it; Meir Kahane, broadly smiling, demonstratively raised both of his hands to signify his support for what was still officially termed "the anti-racist law".

A few hours later, the anti-Peace Law was approved as well, by 48 votes against 25. Among its

supporters were eight members of the Labor party; an identical number of Labor Knesset members voted against it; most Labor Knesset members, including all Labor ministers, were simply not present during the vote.

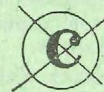
Chronicles of the Peace Struggle

11/9 - A demonstration took place in front of the Chilean Embassy in Tel-Aviv, to mark the anniversary of the coup d'etat which ended Chilean democracy in 1973.

17/9 - The police interrogated peace activist Ehud Spiegel, about his wearing the ICIPP emblem, which consists of the crossed flags of Israel and Palestine. The interrogation was the result of a complaint lodged against Spiegel by right-wing lawyer Elyakim Haetzni, who claimed that wearing the emblem is an offence under of the "Anti-Terrorist Act", which forbids "identification with a terrorist organization". Spiegel presented to the police officer interrogating him a letter sent to the ICIPP in 1984 by Yehudit Tzur, the Attorney-General's aide. The letter stated that wearing the emblem is legal (see issue 4-5).

22/9 - The visit to Israel of the well-known Greek composer and singer Mikis Theodorakis was the occasion of a political confrontation:

In front of the Mann Auditorium in Tel-Aviv, where Theodorakis' performance took place, two camps demonstrated. On one side were right-wingers, angry at Theodorakis' support of Palestinian self-determination; on the other side, members of several parties and peace organizations welcomed Theodorakis as a great artist and a fighter for democracy. Inside, after Theodorakis stated: "I support freedom and liberty for the Israeli people and for the Palestinian people", a group of Likud youth stood up and provocatively sang the Israeli national anthem; nobody else joined them. Three members of Kahane's movement were arrested after throwing stink bombs. After the provocateurs were evicted, the audience received Theodorakis warmly as he sang three hours without a break, giving several encores.



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1/10 – Naftali Or-Ner, a reserve soldier, was sentenced to a 19-day term of imprisonment for refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories.

5/10 – In Jerusalem Gush-Emunim demonstrators, who called for a pardon to the members of the anti-Arab Terrorist Underground, assaulted counter-demonstrators organised by "Ometz" (a student movement of Mapam and Ratz). Police arrested several of the "Ometz" members, while ignoring their assailants.

9/10 – The police broke up a demonstration held in East Jerusalem by "The Committee Confronting the Iron Fist", whose members include Israelis together with Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. Six demonstrators, four Arabs and two Jews, were detained for several hours.

24-31/10 – As in previous years, the Acre Theatre Festival featured several plays dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of them is "Actors", which uses the device of a play within a play: A group of Israeli actors starts rehearsals on a play about the massacre perpetrated by American soldiers at the Vietnamese village of Mai-Lai. Slowly, the actors are drawn into dealing with the Kafr Qassem massacre of 1956, in which the killers were Israelis.

Another play is based on the book "The Opessimist" (half optimist, half pessimist) by the Arab writer Emil Habibi. Habibi, a former Knesset Member for the Israeli Communist Party, is a well-known writer and poet. The book and the play based on it describe in a tragi-comic way the life of Israel's Arab citizens in the period after 1948, when they lived under a military government. Habibi's work was often compared with that of Sholem Aleychem and other writers who described the life of East European Jewry. The theatrical version is a solo effort of Arab player Muhammad Bakri, who plays in Arabic with a simultaneous Hebrew translation available to the audience.

25/10 – Hundreds of members of the "Yesh Gvul" ("There is a Border/There is a Limit") movement put green nylon strips on several kilometres of the pre-'67 border fence, creating a green line visible from a long distance away. This was a symbolic act, in order to remind Israel's citizens that the pre-'67 border (popularly known as "The Green Line") is still Israel's border, and beyond it lies territory under military occupation.

28/10 – Peace activist Gideon Spiro lost an appeal to the Supreme Court against the Civil Service Disciplinary Board, which fired him from his work at a government ministry. Spiro was fired because he wrote several letters to the editors of daily newspapers, in which he attacked the Lebanon War and the occupation of the West Bank.

The Disciplinary Board ruled that writing letters is prohibited under an article in the Civil Service Regulations which forbids government employees from opposing government policies. If strictly enforced, this article could deprive all Israelis employed by the government, several

hundred thousand in number, of their freedom of speech. In practice, it had never been used until the Spiro case, which thus creates a dangerous precedent.

In rejecting the appeal, the Supreme Court ruled that Spiro's firing was legal. However, the verdict restored to him the right to receive a pension from the state treasury.

29/10 – Representatives of Mapam, the PLP and the Communist Party addressed a big rally which took place in Kafr Qassem, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the 1956 massacre, in which a Border Guard unit shot to death 49 inhabitants of the village.

The anniversary renewed public interest in the massacre. Several Israeli newspapers published extensive articles, giving eye-witness accounts of the massacre and tracing the killers, all of whom were pardoned in 1959, after serving only a small part of their prison terms. These pardons were compared with the pardons recently granted to most members of the anti-Arab Terrorist Underground.

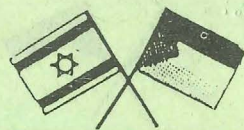
1/11 – Ratz (the Civil Rights Movement) held a joint meeting with West Bank Palestinians, to mark "20 years of occupation".

Hana Seniora, editor of the "El-Fajr" newspaper in East Jerusalem, who was one of the main Palestinian speakers, called for the establishment of a joint Israeli-Palestinian "legal council" which would work to oppose right-wing attacks launched on the juridical level. Recently, Israeli right-wingers have, on various pretexts, lodged a large number of complaints to the police, both against Palestinians and against Israeli peace activists. Seniora himself is the target of an appeal to the Supreme Court by settler lawyer Elyakim Haetzni. Haetzni asked the court to order the arrest of Seniora for being a PLO supporter.

12/11 – "Ha'aretz" published a petition signed by 120 Israelis, protesting the government's intention to expell Akram Hanniyeh, editor of the East Jerusalem "A-Sha'ab" newspaper. In East Jerusalem, a large protest rally took place, with the participation of Israelis and Palestinians. The Israeli speakers included KMs Muhammad Miari of the PLP and Ran Cohen of Ratz, as well as representatives of "Peace Now" and "The East for Peace". East Jerusalem journalists stated that there is no precedent for such a wide participation of Israelis in an action protecting civil rights in the Occupied Territories.

13/11 – A children's play, "The Explosion on Ahalan Street" aroused great public controversy. The play was originally commissioned by the Israeli Ministry of Education, in order to present to children the problems of the Israeli-Arab conflict. The play deals with a girl, daughter to an Arab father and a Jewish mother, whose father is falsely accused of planting a bomb.

Under pressure of racist groups, the Jerusalem municipality decided not to show the play in Jerusalem schools, because "it encourages mixed marriages". At the time of writing, the play is still



at the center of public discussion and its ultimate fate is unclear.

18/11 – Nearly twenty years after the Six-Day-War, a new Israeli film explores that war from an unfamiliar angle. During the 1967 nationalist euphoria, a feeling of contempt for the “cowardly” Arab soldiers was widespread in Israel. The new film, “Avanti Popolo”, seeks, as its director stated, to “re-humanise the two-legged animals” (referring to a notorious racist remark made by Menachem Begin). The film centers on two Egyptian soldiers who wander the Sinai desert after the breakup of the Egyptian army, showing their encounter with an Israeli patrol, and the way in which hostility turns into friendship, symbolised by the Italian song “Avanti Popolo”, known to both Egyptians and Israelis.

23/11 – To protest violent attacks by settlers and right-wing thugs on Arabs in East Jerusalem, members of the religious “Netivot Shalom” (“Peace Roads”) and “Oz le-Shalom” (“Courage for Peace”) demonstrated in East Jerusalem for Jewish-Arab coexistence.

26/11 – A protest meeting against the expulsion of Akram Haniyeh took place at the Nve-Tzedek Theatre in Tel-Aviv, with the participation of Israeli artists, academic and political figures.

27/11 – At Tel-Aviv University, Jewish and Arab students from the “Campus” movement picketed a hall where a lecture by the racist KM Rafael Eitan took place.

– Members of two parties, Mapam and Shinuy, picketed the police headquarters in Jerusalem, to protest police tolerance of racist violence in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Israeli racists had used the stabbing to death of a yeshiva student as a pretext to assault indiscriminately Arab inhabitants of East Jerusalem, destroy their property and set houses on fire. The police claimed that a racist demonstration, under the slogans “Arabs-out!” and “Death to the Arabs!” constituted a “religious procession” and, as such, could not be prohibited.

Official and unofficial attacks on the PLP

This article was translated from the September, 1986, issue of “Alternativa”, Hebrew-language publication of the PLP. “Alternativa” is available from P.O.B. 31109, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

At the second week of September 1986, Arab members of the PLP were harassed on three consecutive days.

On Tuesday, September 9, the Haifa police called Knesset Member Muhammad Miari at his office, and told him that a fire is raging at his flat. Neighbors had noticed the fire and called the firemen. When Knesset Member Miari arrived at the flat, the fire had already been put out. That evening a man, identifying himself as a member of

Kahane’s “Kach” movement, called Miari on the telephone and said: “This time it was only your property – next time it will your wife and children!” KM Miari lodged a complaint at the police; it is being investigated.

At noon on the following day, Wednesday, September 10, an armed man entered, through the balcony, the house of Rev. Riach Abu-al-Asal, secretary of the Progressive Movement (the Arab component of the PLP). Only Abu-al-Asal’s wife was home the time. The man pointed his gun at her head and said “Keep silent!”. When she began to shout, he run away. The police investigates this incident, too.

On an early morning hour of Thursday, September 11, Kamel Daher, spokesman of the Progressive Movement, woke up to the sound of loud knocking at his door. When he opened, no less than thirty men burst in; some were Income Tax investigators, while others were operatives of the Israeli Security Services. They presented a search warrant signed by a Justice of The Peace from the Safed court. It was officially granted for the purpose of finding documents regarding V.A.T. payments.

In the same house with Adv. Daher live his two brothers, Hani and Nader. The invaders woke up all members of the three families, searched through all papers, and confiscated many documents regarding Adv. Daher’s activity in the PLP, as well as his notebook with addresses and phone numbers.

This incident, of course, is not being investigated, as it concerns a legal act carried out by the forces of law and order, with all legal procedures duly observed. . .

Yiftach Shavit

* * *

The decision of interior Minister Peretz to forbid Rev. Riach Abu al-Asal from travelling abroad continues to arouse protests from all over the world, and particularly from churches. On September 1986, the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church of The United States met in San Antonio, Texas, and adopted the following resolution.

(. . .) This House expresses its deep concern regarding the act of withdrawing the passport of Canon Riach, Rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Nazareth;

(. . .) This House restates its position regarding the rights of persons to free travel and free expression;

(. . .) This House deplors any action which impedes or circumscribes any priest from the priestly exercise of his or her Ministry;

(. . .) This House makes these declarations as it reaffirms its commitment to a peace process in the Middle East, which will issue in a secure continuing existence of the State of Israel, at peace with a Palestinian homeland.



The Communist Party apologises to the PLP

Since the 1984 elections campaign, Rakach (the Israeli Communist Party) had regarded the appearance of the PLP with extreme hostility, since the PLP won wide support among Israel's Arab citizens, whom Rakach traditionally regarded as its own exclusive fief. Rakach's propaganda campaign against the PLP reached its peak with an article by Prof. Ysrael Shachak, published on July 11, 1984, in Rakach's Hebrew and Arab newspapers.

In this article wild accusations were brought against the PLP leaders, including the charge that Matti Peled had been responsible for a massacre of Palestinians in 1956, when he was the military governor of the Gaza Strip.

When the PLP started a libel suit against Rakach, the Communists could not, of course, substantiate these imaginary charges. On November 12, 1986, the Communist paper *Zu ha-Derech* published an apology, stating that "(...) this article contained factual statements and hurting expressions against Peled and Avnery, including charges of alleged misdeeds during Peled's tenure as governor of the Gaza Strip. These statements and expressions were untrue. We apologise for the sorrow caused to Avnery and Peled and for the damage done to their reputations."

It is to be hoped that the Communist Party will henceforth refrain from using such methods, and that, in future, Israeli Peace activists of all parties will be spared the need to waste their precious resources on conducting such useless struggles.

Miari and Peled tour North America

The two Progressive List for Peace Knesset Members toured Canada and the USA from September 14 to October 1, 1986. The Canadian part of the tour was sponsored by "The Committee for Peace in the Middle East" of Montreal, and the Toronto University Middle East Group (TUMEG). The two MKs spent three days in Montreal. Among the persons and groups with whom they met there were Canadian Jews, Canadian Arabs, radio broadcasters, editorial boards of leading papers, Church leaders, and members of the Faculty of the Quebec University. In Ottawa the visitors were hosted for two days by the National Council on Canadian-Arab Relations. The program included a luncheon and discussion with the Middle East Discussion Group at the Canadian Parliament, lectures at the Ottawa and Carleton Universities, and informal meetings with "The Friends of Peace Now" and with Church leaders, as well as radio and

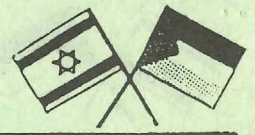
press interviews. A similar program at Toronto also included an hour-long discussion on the CHCH television network in Hamilton, and a public lecture at OISE.

The United States part was organized and sponsored by the America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, with the cooperation of the AFSC (American Friends Service Committee), the Foundation for Middle East Peace of Washington, the Palestine Human Rights Campaign and the Middle East Forum of Pittsburgh. It included three days in the Boston area where the visitors addressed groups at Tufts University, MIT, and the Harvard Faculty Club. They were interviewed by "The Boston Globe" and "The Jewish Advocate". In Washington, the two visitors videotaped a half-hour message to the Conference of the Presbyterian Church held in San Antonio, Texas, which discussed the issue of peace in The Middle East. Later, they spoke at a luncheon given by Mr. Merle Thorpe Jr., President of the FMEP (Foundation for Middle East Peace) at the Metropolitan Club. Their program also included a reception for members of Congress and leaders of fifteen organizations at Mott House, a visit to the State Department Human Rights Division, an interview at the Arab-American Affairs Journal, meetings and discussions on Capitol Hill with Congressman Horton (Republican, N.Y.) and with the staff of the House Foreign Affairs Middle East Subcommittee. A very successful public meeting was organized by the International Law Committee of the District of Columbia Bar. The Washington part of the tour ended with a luncheon meeting at "The Jerusalem Fund" office, where a useful discussion with Professor Hisham Sharabi and a group of Palestinians was held.

From Washington, Mr. Miari flew to Los Angeles to address a conference of the Arab-American community. Mr. Peled went on to Philadelphia to speak at the Reconstructionist Synagogue at Media, and meet with a group of friends of the PLP at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Barsky at Cheltenham. Afterwards he went to Pittsburgh for two days of meetings, radio and press interviews, public speaking and a luncheon discussion with members of UJF (United Jewish Federation).

The two PLP MKs were impressed by the great interest and sympathy which greeted their views and analyses of the situation in the Middle East and of the policies which can bring about a solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict. They were particularly interested in the cooperation between Arabs and Jews, in committees and other types of local organizations which support a solution based on the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to self-determination and coexistence in two separate states, alongside each other. About seventy such organizations now exist in Canada and the United States. To a remarkably greater degree than in the past, the American media are willing to give expression to such views.

The reception of the message by the Jewish



community is still very limited, due to this community's established position that criticism of Israel, voiced by peace-seeking Israelis, has no right to be heard outside Israel. Nevertheless, even here an encouraging change was noticeable. Jewish leaders were present at some of the meetings and, occasionally, Jewish establishment circles were willing to be exposed to such criticism. The appearance of both a Jew and an Arab from Israel, advocating the same position, seems to have a positive impact on concerned audiences.

The Dialogue Goes On

The following is the concluding chapter of Uri Avnery's book: "My Friend, The Enemy", which describes the dialogue between Israelis and the PLO since its inception in 1976. It is available from Zed Books Ltd., 57 Caledonian Rd., London N1 9BV, U.K. The French version, "Mon Frere, L'ennemi", is available from Liana Levi et Editions du Scribe, Paris, France.

(. . .) I have to stop the narrative here. Not because it has come to an end. On the contrary, looking back over the last ten and a half years, since my first meeting with Said Hammami in London, I realize that we are still only at the first section of a long road. I have tried to tell this story as truthfully as I could. Perhaps it is a sad story, perhaps an encouraging one. We have suffered a host of defeats and setbacks. But we have also encountered human perseverance, dedication to an ideal, courage in the face of adversity. People have given their lives, many have faced daily danger for years – not for war, but for peace.

What have we achieved? Has anything been won at all? Those who gave their lives, those who sacrificed political careers and material benefits, those who have suffered unspeakable calumny, who have been branded by their peoples as traitors and fools – have their endeavors been in vain? To me, the answer is self-evident. This long effort, this adventure for peace is of historic significance. I often feel like a boy playing a game which was popular during my childhood: You face a blank wall and hide your face. A group of other boys is trying to reach you, starting some distance away. Whenever you turn round you see no movement, but the other boys are not standing where they stood before.

The thousands of hours we have spent in argument with our Palestinian counterparts, trying to explain to them Israeli problems, Israeli traumas, Israeli realities, have had a profound impact – not only on the people with whom we spoke, but on an ever-widening circle of PLO leaders and officials. During these ten years the PLO had advanced an immense distance towards peace. This has been hidden behind a smokescreen of propaganda, both Palestinian and Israeli. But ten years ago Hammami seemed a solitary figure, with his patrons only vaguely discernible in the fog; today the governing bodies of the PLO have openly adopted resolutions designed to lead to an

international peace conference, which means a readiness to recognize Israel and make peace with it.

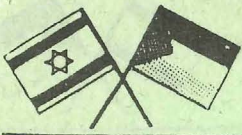
This is not enough. Many more steps have to be taken before peace becomes possible. But the present stance of the PLO leadership is sufficient for the negotiations to start, provided Israel and the U.S. are ready for them. It is my deep conviction that nothing can take the place of direct, face-to-face dialogue. Dialogue has become a cult phrase, a cliché, an empty slogan on pamphlets. But in reality dialogue is one of the most profound human and political instruments. One does not only exchange looks, involuntary facial expressions, unconscious gestures. One persuades and is persuaded in many ways, conscious and unconscious. One detects truth and mendacity. One uses one's intuition. This is true between friends and lovers. It is even truer between enemies. One does not make peace except with enemies, and one does not make peace with enemies who are despised or who are conceived of as inhuman monsters.

After four generations of war between the Jews and the Palestinians, the enemy – the PLO and its leaders – are regarded by Jewish Israelis as demons, as abominations. In exactly the same way Palestinians regard the hated Zionists, not as normal people with their everyday hopes and cares, but as the new Nazis, beyond the pale of humanity.

Our dialogue had helped to shatter these diabolical images. It has de-demonized each side in the eyes of the other. Arafat sitting between an Israeli General and an Israeli Member of Parliament is not the same "captain of murderers" he was before; and Zionists cannot all be devils if they sit next to Arafat. Political decisions are made by people. People's actions are shaped by their perceptions. Mere politicians do not understand the underlying psychological realities of the world in which they move. Our job is to change these realities on both sides, in order to change the course of events from war to peace.

* * *

The Palestinians have changed, and I believe that our action has had some bearing on this. Can the same be said about the Israelis? A Palestinian diplomat once told me: "The gap between the two sides remains unchanged. The more we become moderate, the more the Israelis become extreme". He was not wrong. At this very moment, the intransigence of the Israeli government is reaching new heights. There is a total Israeli veto on any negotiations with the real representatives of the Palestinian people, not only by Israel but also by the US. The peace process, so much talked about, has come to a total standstill. Fearing, not without justification, that the peace process will lead to the creation of a Palestinian state in the territories now being Judaized by the Government of National Unity, the government is trying to stop this process right at the beginning. Realizing the importance of our dialogue, the government is paying us a



dangerous compliment. A new law, making everything we have done during the past ten years a crime, will probably bring us to prison. Meeting for peace is now a crime. Meeting for war remains a virtue.

At the same time the Knesset has enacted another law, designed to prevent Arabs from taking part in Israeli democracy. Under the guise of combating racism, this law says that no list of candidates will be allowed to stand for election if it denies that "Israel is the State of the Jewish people". A philosophical and historical question – Who are the Jews? Is there a Jewish people? – has been turned by law into the demand for an ideological declaration, reminding one of medieval times. The law does not mention the existence of 700,000 Palestinian who are full Israeli citizens. It simply demands that they abjure their stake in the State. At the moment of concluding this narrative the chances of peace are at their lowest ebb. Both in Israel and among the Palestinians, powerful forces are arrayed against it. Both super-powers seem indifferent. The prospect of another war, with its dead and maimed, looms on the horizon. This time the target may be Amman.

* * *

"The Messiah, even if he is late, come he will!" Promises an old Jewish saying. So be it with peace. It may come late, it may come very late, but it will come. It will come not because the leaders are wise and good, or because the peoples are rational and sensible, or because the Great Powers are generous and imbued with good will. It will come because there is no alternative. Israel is there. It will not go away. It cannot be destroyed without turning the whole Middle East into a graveyard for generations to come. The Palestinian people are there. Dispersed, dispossessed, oppressed by many, deprived of their place among the nations, but there. They will not go away. Because of this, there is no solution but co-existence and peace. No war will solve this question. As long as there is no peace, wars will break out again and again, bringing death and misery to both peoples. But after every war, the problem will still be there. Peace needs dialogue. Dialogue between official leaderships, dialogue between the peoples, and first of all dialogue between people of good will.

The PLO in trouble – but. . .

This article was originally published on September 26, 1986, in "Geshet" ("Bridge") – a Palestinian bi-weekly in Hebrew published at East Jerusalem. As its name implies, that newspaper addresses itself to serving as a bridge between Israelis and Palestinians.

The PLO is in trouble. To see that, it is not necessary to be an "expert on Arab affairs", an Orientalist at a University or a member of an intelligence service; the PLO's predicament could clearly be perceived by any layman.

The PLO is faced with both external and

internal problems. The 17th session of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), which took place at Amman in November 1984, clearly reflected those problems; when the PLO's quasi-parliamentary body was convened, unity was lacking in the Palestinian ranks. The PLO's mainstream, led by Yasser Arafat, had an impressive achievement in the very convening of the PNC, which many observers had believed to be impossible; the mainstream also gained at the PNC a majority for resolutions expressing willingness to promote a political initiative; nevertheless, the absence of several important member organizations of the PLO was a sad indication of the division which prevailed in Palestinian ranks since the battles of Beirut (1982) and Tripoli (1983).

Since the Lebanon War (and, in fact, even before it), the PLO had to face an almost impossible choice between two objectives: unity in the Palestinian ranks and the independence of Palestinian decision-making. Opting for unity in the ranks makes all PLO decisions subject to the veto of Arab regimes which control or influence Palestinian organizations – thus dooming the PLO to political paralysis, exactly when dynamic initiatives are urgently required. On the other hand, opting for independent decision-making endangers the unity of the PLO, precisely when the initiatives of its leadership require the unified backing of the entire Palestinian camp; independent Palestinian policies are also bound to bring about conflicts – small or big – with various Arab regimes.

After long hesitations, Arafat definitely and decisively opted for independent decision-making; he paid for it a high price, by losing internal unity. Arafat no longer had the ability to control all the factions of his organization – an ability he had previously possessed. (For example, observance of the 1981 cease-fire between the PLO and Israel by all the Palestinian organizations was strictly enforced by Arafat.)

Tragically, the PLO's decision to sacrifice unity in order to gain freedom of political initiative was of no avail. The United States and Israel categorically refuse to accept any PLO participation in what they call "the peace process", dooming this process to failure and meaninglessness. The total exclusion of the PLO indicates to PLO moderates that moderation does not pay off for the Palestinian cause; the PLO is forced to search for ways to restore its unity, which could only be done by moving closer to the radicals, and away from the political options.

The internal weakness of the PLO almost automatically encourages certain Arab regimes to interfere in Palestinian affairs, by encouraging divisive tendencies inside the PLO and by constantly threatening to set up "alternative leaderships". Other Arab regimes still officially adhere to the resolutions of the 1974 Rabat Arab Summit, which recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian People; in practice, however, those regimes cut



down their economic, logistic and political support for the PLO, refuse to accept PLO institutions and installations on their soil, and tacitly impose various restrictions on PLO members.

In the occupied territories, the moves undertaken by the Israeli authorities (in coordination with Jordan) clearly indicate an Israeli attempt to reap the full profit from the PLO's weakness, by pushing the inhabitants of the territories to frustration and despair at the PLO's "barrenness" and its failure to bring about the end of the occupation. The Israeli decision-makers hope that such frustration will make the Palestinians resigned to continued Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or that they would accept "functional" agreements between Israel and Jordan, with American blessing; such agreements (envisaged especially by some Labor Party leaders) are also designed to leave Israeli control intact, under some disguise or another.

There can be little doubt that Israeli officials feel a great satisfaction at the crisis in the PLO. For those of the "Sharon School", the PLO's problems are a desirable result of the Lebanon War; Sharon launched the invasion of Lebanon, not because of any military threat posed by the PLO, but in order to eliminate a "political threat" – the "threat" posed by the very existence of a strong and unified PLO, which could not be ignored in any Middle East political equation.

The supporters of the "Jordanian option" in the Labor Party, for their part, hope that the weakness of the PLO will give a better chance of implementing some kind of deal with King Hussein, to which some dozens of so-called "authentic Palestinians" will lend a thin disguise.

Nevertheless –

I would advise both Israeli and other governments not to rejoice at the PLO's present weakness.

The PLO does have problems, undoubtedly; but this is not the first time. It could be said that the PLO was born into unceasing problems of all kinds. The objective condition of the Palestinians as a torn people, dispersed all over the Arab World and beyond, is in itself a sore problem and the root of ever-new troubles. The firm desire of the Palestinians to determine their own fate and emancipate themselves from the tutelage of bickering Arab régimes is itself the cause of endless problems.

The Palestinian people and the PLO, their genuine national organization, have known many troubled times: from the "Black September" of 1970, through the horrible Tel-el-Za'atar massacre of 1976, to the Beyrut siege and the massacres of Sabra and Shatila in 1982; with a ceaseless repression going on, at all times, in the occupied territories. The Palestinians have been through troubled periods in the past, and will probably face more of them in the future. Nevertheless, the Palestinian People still exists, the PLO still exists, and any attempt to separate the two is doomed to failure; this is well-known in Jerusalem and in

Washington, in Amman and in Damascus, in Tunis and in Baghdad.

The PLO is alive, and is indeed the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, wherever they may be. This does not stem from the Rabat summit resolutions, twelve years ago; nor was it necessary to wait for the findings of the recent public opinion survey, held in the West Bank by "El-Fajr" newspaper, to know that an overwhelming majority of Palestinians under occupation supports the PLO.

The PLO is the representative of the Palestinian People because a representative organization is a vital requirement for any people fighting for liberation; taking away this organization would turn a people back into an atomised mere "population". This is why Jews had clung to the Zionist movement before 1948; this is why Palestinians everywhere feel a strong need to maintain a representative national organization; this is why they continue, and will continue, to maintain this organization, despite all its weaknesses, crises and hardships.

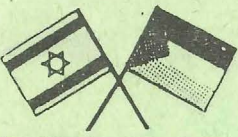
The government of Israel should realize that what is bad for the PLO is not necessarily good for Israel. When the PLO is weak, fragmented and denied all chance of participating in a political solution; when the Palestinian population is driven to despair, under these conditions, new outbursts of violence and bloodshed are inevitable. Only a strong PLO leadership could be a partner for negotiations, for breaking the cycle of violence and establishing Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Yossi Amitay

Rules are necessary for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue to be fruitful

Afif Safieh's article "Dead Ends?" and Boaz Evron's reply "Where we Stand" in New Outlook, July 1986, give us a glimpse at a rare attempt to discuss the very complex problem of Israeli-Palestinian peaceful national coexistence; in other words the prospects of peace or war in the Middle East. It is this writer's opinion, due to knowledge of both protagonists' convictions, in writing and orally, that such a dialogue has been made possible only because each of the two authors is deeply convinced of the necessity to solve this bloody dispute by insisting firmly on the "legitimate" rights of his own people, while accepting wholeheartedly the same rights of his adversary. However, such a dialogue demands certain self-imposed restrictions and good understanding of the historical and psychological background of the other people.

The Israeli Peace Camp is, generally, convinced that the mainstream of the Palestinian national movement (the PLO) has gone a long way towards recognizing Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state. Afif Safieh brings us a long list of indications leading towards this recognition, such



as the acceptance of the Breznev plan and the Fez plan, or the meticulous observance by the PLO and all its affiliated organizations of the 1981 cease-fire, concluded indirectly between the PLO and the Begin government. But to a people so remote from Palestinian aspirations, highly suspicious of them and subject to daily anti-Palestinian propaganda, as the Israeli people are, a clear-cut and dramatic exposure of this PLO position must be presented.

In fact, Afif Safieh's presentation itself is bound to give rise to the inevitable question: is this the last word from the Palestinian national movement? Will it not insist, at a later stage, on what it regards a "just" solution? Boaz Evron's reply at this point is to be accepted and even extended: the two-state solution is a just solution, because it recognizes the right of self-determination of each of the two nations existing on this piece of land. Therefore, the PLO's plan prior to 1974, to turn the whole of the country into a single "democratic non-confessional state" was bound to be rejected as contradicting the Israeli people's aspiration to self-determination.

It is, of course, impossible to dwell on all of the many points discussed in these two articles, but one should make two more remarks on Afif Safieh's exposure. First, the history of the Jewish settlement in Palestine and of the Zionist movement in the last 100 years is certainly worth a thorough investigation. However, this should be done by historians and not by people dealing in finding a solution to our conflict, because any such historical analysis is bound to increase disagreement and does not change the existential fact: two nations do exist here today and both have the right to self-determination.

The other point that has to be made is connected with what seems to be part of Afif Safieh's sensitivity. His use of the term "conceptual aggression" is quite misleading. With regard to the Balfour Declaration, this is irrelevant today, and was only slightly relevant at its time: The creation of the Jewish nation in Palestine had been a product of Jewish history in 19th and 20th Centuries, as well as of the heritage (religious and secular) of the Jews during the whole period of their existence.

Boaz Evron's reply is, in part, a legitimate and correct answer to some of Afif Safieh's misconceptions. The other part, however, is a polemic wrong in its assumptions and inadmissible in its interference in Palestinian tactics. True, not all of the Palestinian population has been expelled by Israel's armed forces during and after the 1948 war. Even so, it was Israel's duty to allow all refugees, even if they had left their homes under misconceived propaganda or out of fear, to return to their homes. It may be correct that massive Jewish immigration of European origin, partly wealthy, had improved the standard of living of some Palestinians, but the mere mentioning of it by an Israeli dove in the context of our national dispute is irrelevant and even adds to mutual

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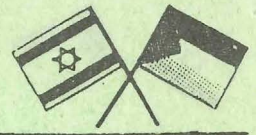
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mistrust. True, the Histadrut's policy in insisting on Jewish labour within the Jewish economy might have contributed to the building of the Israeli Jewish nation (but what consolation is this to the Palestinian nation?!) and might have prevented temporarily (not anymore today) the formation of a quasi-colonial Jewish economy – but the deplorable fact remains that the Histadrut had insisted on a Trade Union movement segregated along national lines and thus had increased the frictions and mistrust between the two peoples.

But the most deplorable part in Boaz Evron's reply is his interference with the tactics adopted by the Palestinians in their national struggle. Sure, any Israeli peace partisan has the right (and duty) to insist on two fundamental demands: The first is unconditional recognition of the right of the Israeli nation to exist and exercise full national sovereignty (alongside the Palestinian nation). Secondly, we should demand self-imposed restrictions on the Palestinian armed struggle for independence, excluding totally indiscriminate terrorist acts having as their target random civilian victims – just as we make similar demands on the Israeli authorities. However, to advice the PLO on whether or not to accept the crippled 242 resolution (denying any national rights to the Palestinian,) is beyond the scope of even the most well-wishing Israeli peace fighter. The decision whether the Palestinians should indulge in a passive resistance movement of Gandhi's type (without paying attention to the vast differences in conditions between the Palestinians and a huge nation struggling in its own country against a weak colonial administration) is completely a matter for discussion within the PLO.

True, the Israeli peace forces are still very weak and the Palestinian national movement is at the moment divided and weakened more than ever. But it is the conviction of this writer that dynamic changes are possible. Proper strategy, better understanding of the real concerns of the other side and correct conduct of the dialogue may contribute vastly to the strengthening of the Israeli peace forces and to a significant Palestinian shift towards realistic conceptions.

Israel Loeff

The Vanunu affair and the Nuclear Predicament

Most newspaper readers all over the world are, by now, familiar with the name of Mordechai Vanunu, the former employee of Israel's nuclear pile at Dimona, who gave the London "Sunday Times" a sensational account of that closely guarded pile. The Vanunu Affair has many points of interest. Parts of Vanunu's strange career seem to be taken out of the pages of a spy thriller; the Israeli and world media concentrated much of their attention on a relentless search for the smallest

details of Vanunu's personal life. This partly resulted from the Israeli government's heavy-handed use of military censorship to silence any serious discussion on the issue of nuclear armament. Censorship went as far as entirely cutting out the editorials of several newspapers – a measure rarely used against Hebrew papers in Israel since the 1950's.

Another issue brought to light by the Vanunu Affair is a provision in Israeli law giving the government power to maintain secret prisons and hold secret trials in cases concerning state security. Only after several weeks did the government reluctantly admit that Vanunu is indeed imprisoned in Israel. Finally, the fact that Vanunu had been an active member of several peace groups was used by the extreme right as a pretext to open a McCarthyist campaign, accusing practically all members of the peace movement of being "traitors" and "potential spies".

The most important aspect of the affair remains, however, Vanunu's disclosures themselves. If these are to be believed, Israel possesses about 200 nuclear bombs, and is the world's sixth nuclear power. The very considerable trouble to which the Israeli authorities went to bring Vanunu back from Britain, risking a strain on British-Israeli relations, lends more credibility to his disclosures.

Many Israelis feel quite pleased with the idea of Israel having a nuclear monopoly in the Middle East. They believe that nuclear armament ensures Israel's existence, making her secure from any Arab attack. This, however, is a very short-sighted view. Inevitably, the possession of nuclear arms by Israel is perceived as an intolerable threat by the Arab countries, who seek to obtain similar arms themselves. Such acts as Israel's bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981 can slow down this process, but not stop it.

Sooner or later, other Middle Eastern countries will also possess nuclear arms. In the best (or least evil) case, a Middle Eastern "Balance of Terror" will then be established, with neither side daring to use its nuclear arsenal. Even that is not a very cheerful prospect to those who seek genuine peace; but there is no guarantee that such a balance will indeed be established.

Both in Israel and in the Arab and Muslim countries, religious and nationalist fanatics are numerous and powerful. On either side, nuclear weapons might eventually fall into the hands of leaders ruthless enough to use them and risk the consequences. Thus, nuclear armament – far from being an absolute guarantee for Israel's security – may spell Israel's doom and turn the entire Middle East into a radioactive desert.

To stop this horror, the Israeli Peace movement must, like its European and American counterparts, adopt the call for nuclear disarmament and the creation of a nuclear-free Middle East.

Adam Keller