

The Other Israel

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for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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Figures in a ledger

At an early morning hour on March 13, 1987, Israeli soldiers arrived at the house of Muhammad and Raja Rabiah in Gaza. The wife, Raja, aged nineteen, and her two children – aged, respectively, sixteen months and three weeks – were loaded into a car and deported over the Egyptian border. Thus ended, in failure, the long struggle which the Rabiah family had waged for the right to live together in Gaza.

Raja Rabiah is a member of a Palestinian refugee family, originally from the Gaza Strip, which after long wanderings settled in the Gulf Emirate of Abu-Dhabi. After marrying a relative who had stayed in Gaza, Raja Rabiah applied to the military authorities for permission to reside in the Gaza Strip. Permission was denied; she was issued only a short-term, non-renewable, visitor's visa. An appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court failed, and the "foreign" wife was expelled with her children, who were born in Gaza.

The Rabiah case is but one out of thousands of cases which occur every year. The military authorities have taken the position that marriage to a resident of the occupied territories does not confer a right of residence. Family reunification is not considered an inherent right, but a special privilege; the military governor has complete discretion, and in most cases decides not to grant it. In an affidavit presented to the Supreme Court it was stated that "clemency was misused for the purpose of importing foreigners into the area". The Supreme Court accepted the government's position, and ruled that the authorities have the right to refuse residence permits to any "foreigner", even if the "foreigner" is married to a resident.

The authorities justify this attitude by numerous excuses, such as "limited economic capacity". The brutal truth is that the Israeli government regards the presence of Palestinians as an undesirable hinderance; while it does not resort to the mass expulsions advocated by the extreme right, it does use every opportunity to reduce their number. In the Rabiah case, as in many others, the government succeeded: the husband, Muhammad Rabiah, himself a legal resident of Gaza, voluntarily chose to follow his wife and children into exile. Some planner in some obscure office can now chalk up one more success, one more Palestinian disposed

of.

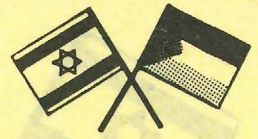
At the very time that the Israeli government callously tramples on the right of Palestinians to "family reunification", it stridently demands the very same right for Soviet Jews. Ministers and Knesset Members enthusiastically sponsor the demonstrations of Jewish women demanding to be reunified with sons or husbands who are not allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

However, regarding the Soviet Jews, too, there are very questionable motives behind Israeli official policies. The government does not regard Soviet Jews as free agents, who have the right to decide their own fate. In its view, Soviet Jews should go to Israel, and to Israel only. Since the majority of Jews who leave the Soviet Union prefer to go to the United States, Israel is ready to use coercion. The government had officially asked the U.S. authorities to deny Soviet Jews the refugee status which they now enjoy and turn them away. Behind the scenes, secret negotiations appear to be going on between the Israeli and Soviet governments, aimed at arranging direct flights of Jews from Moscow to Tel-Aviv, thus cutting out the Vienna stop-over which gives Soviet Jews the chance to "escape" to America. According to some accounts, the institution of such direct flights is one of Israel's conditions for agreeing to Soviet participation in a Middle East peace conference.

Regarding both Palestinians and Soviet Jews, the Israeli official policies are guided by cold and inhuman considerations; human beings are transformed into mere figures in a demographic ledger, with Jews entered on the "credit" and Palestinians – on the "debit" side. The wishes and desires of human beings, Jews or Palestinians, count for nothing in comparison with the need to redress the demographic balance.

To these sordid calculations we, in the Israeli peace movement, counterpose our vision of *The Other Israel* – an Israel whose policies will be based on respect for the rights and aspirations, personal and national, of all human beings.

The Editor



The Anti-Peace Trial opens

On March 9, 1987, began the trial of four members of the Israeli delegation which met with PLO members in Romania, in November 1986. This is the first trial held under the Anti-Peace Law, forbidding such meetings, which was enacted in August 1986.

A week before the trial began, the other sixteen members of the delegation appeared in a press conference in Jerusalem and presented a letter which they have sent to Attorney-General Charish, reading:

Sir

From the press we have learned that criminal proceedings have been initiated against Yael Lotan, Latif Dori, Eliezer Feiler and Reuven Kaminer, four of our comrades in the peace delegation to Romania. We, who participated with them in that delegation, call upon you to use your authority and stop the criminal proceedings against them. If, however, you would not use that authority, we believe there is no justification to discriminate in out favor and we call upon you to treat all of us equally and put all of us on trial.

Among the signatories was Adam Keller, editor of *The Other Israel*, who had participated in the "Romanian" delegation.

As could have been predicted, the Attorney-General chose to ignore this challenge and to continue proceeding against four members only. In this, as in many other things, the government's intention to downplay the trial was evident. For example, the state refused a defence plea to have a special bench of three judges sit in this case, which is bound to create an important precedent. Instead, the trial was turned over to an obscure Justice of the Peace. The trial takes place in the small courtroom of Ramleh, which is located in an annex to the Ramleh police station. Everything was done to keep the trial out of sight and out of mind; but on the morning of March 9, the courtroom was overcrowded with journalists from all over the world, and when the four accused stepped inside, many television cameras started to tick.

While the trial was taking place, outside the courtroom a confrontation developed between peace demonstrators, who came to encourage the accused, and supporters of the racist Kahane, who shouted wildly: "Hang the traitors!". The police officially maintained "neutrality" and "impartiality"; the placards of all demonstrators were confiscated, and when one of Kahane's men assaulted a peace demonstrator, both of them were immediately defendants, by the police. However, several policemen, members of the notorious "Border Guard", did not conceal their sympathy with Kahane, and from time to time even joined in the shouting of his followers.

Meanwhile, the trial started inside. The accused pleaded "not guilty" to all the charges. Their two lawyers, Amnon Zichroni and Avigdor Feldman,

presented preliminary pleas, asking that the case be dismissed. Their arguments were based on precedents and rulings of the Israeli Supreme Court. They stated that the law should be interpreted in such a way that only meetings which are aimed at supporting terrorism would constitute a punishable offence, since it is inconceivable that a law should forbid a meeting just because it is a meeting, regardless of its content and the intention of its participants; that such a law is unparalleled in the Israeli legal system; and that a law which restricts basic rights, such as the freedom of speech and the freedom of association, should be interpreted in the narrowest possible way.

The judge rejected the plea to dismiss the case out of hand; he did, however, state in writing, several days later, that the defence attorneys' pleas contained weighty arguments, raising difficult and important questions which he would consider after hearing the testimony.

The next session of this trial was fixed for April 27.

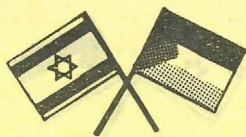
International Solidarity

Since the start of criminal proceedings against members of the "Romanian" delegation, messages of solidarity have been coming, in growing numbers, from different countries around the globe. A petition from France, signed by French scientists, academics and artists, as well as by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders, was published in Ha'aretz on March 6; it called for the abolition of the Anti-Peace Law and the stopping of the trial. Similar petitions are now circulating in other countries. Readers wishing to participate in these efforts should contact the Committee for Abolition of the Anti-Peace Law, at P.O.B. 20373, Tel-Aviv, Israel. All cheques should be made payable to Sinai Peter.

While the proceedings against the "Romanian" delegation members continue, several meetings between Israelis and PLO members have taken place.

In January, the Israeli writer and peace activist Amos Kenan participated in a number of joint press conferences with Zehdi Labib Terzi, the PLO permanent observer to the United Nations, during a U.N.-sponsored lecture tour in several South American countries. On January 20, the extreme-right Knesset Member Rafael Eitan lodged a complaint to the police. At the time of writing it is not yet clear whether proceedings will, in fact, be started against Kenan.

On March 14, a public meeting took place at a town near Bordeaux, France, with the participation of Aryeh Shafir, Mapam representative in Europe, and Amin Abu-Hatzira, the deputy PLO representative to France. Both Shafir and



Abu-Hatzira answered the questions put to them by the audience, but did not address each other, and sat at opposite sides of the podium, with members of the French Socialist Party and of anti-racist organizations sitting between them. These precautions, taken by Shafir after consultations with the Mapam leadership in Israel, were designed to prevent the meeting from being illegal, taking advantage of "loopholes" in the text of the Anti-Peace Law.

The proximity in dates between this meeting and the start of the Anti-Peace Trial could hardly be an accident. In November 1986, Mapam's Secretary-General, Elazar Granot, appeared on Israeli Television, sharply denounced the Romanian meeting, and disowned Latif Dori, the Mapam member who headed the delegation, now one of the accused at the trial. However, in the following months, public support for the participants of the Romanian meeting grew. The Mapam leadership, under conflicting pressures from the party rank and file, needs to navigate a delicate path between its wish to appear as a respectable, law-abiding, "loyal opposition", and the need to maintain its credibility as a part of the peace movement; the Shafir-Abu-Hatzira meeting seems to be a typical compromise solution.

A mysterious case concerns an assistant to the Israeli military attache in Washington, who is said to have participated in a symposium at Tufts University, together with "Palestinians identified with the PLO". According to "Hadashot" newspaper, the case is being investigated by the Israeli security services; the man was quoted as having told the investigators that after ending work at 5 p.m. he is a private person, and that he saw no harm in expressing his views at the symposium. The exact significance of this case is not yet clear.

The latest event occurred on March 26. Ibrahim Sus, the PLO representative in France, was conspicuous among the audience at a lecture given in Paris by Yossi Beylin, the general manager of the Israeli Foreign Office and one of Shimon Peres' closest associates. Beylin and Sus did not talk directly to each other, and officially Beylin denied having known in advance that Sus would come to his lecture; but both the French and the Israeli media generally assumed that Sus' appearance was pre-arranged.

Together with Minister Ezer Weitzman's clear stand in favor of negotiations with the PLO (see separate article), all these widely differing incidents show that Israeli-Palestinian dialogue cannot be stopped. This dialogue, which is a vital need for the peoples of this region, is bound to prevail against all restrictions and prohibitions.

The Defendants Speak Out

The following is the text of a declaration issued by the defendants, members of the peace delegation to Romania:

We have come to the trial sincerely hoping that we will be able to prove in open court that

The following is a statement by the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (ICIPP), published as a paid advertisement in Ha'aretz on March 8, 1987:

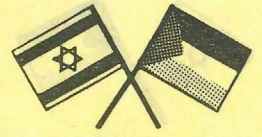
The law forbidding meetings between Israelis and Palestinians is a despicable law, which has no place on the law books of a democratic state. It is a law designed to foil, in advance, any dialogue, any agreement, any understanding between Israelis and Palestinians; a law which has nothing to do with the security of the state. This is a law against peace, a law against the supporters of peace.

The ICIPP demands both the abolition of this Draconian law and the withdrawal of all criminal charges against the four Israeli citizens who conducted an open dialogue with Palestinians out of a genuine desire to further the cause of peace. The conviction of these four would be tantamount to a collective conviction of all peace seekers in Israel.

we have not committed any crime. Indeed, we traveled to Romania in order to advance the cause of peace and understanding between our people and the Palestinians — and we did this out in the open. (. . .) The question, of no small importance in itself, as to whether the four of us committed any crime when we travelled to Romania will be determined in court, and not in the media. (. . .) At the same time it is natural and even desirable that the trial will rekindle the debate on the law itself, a law which was passed after a sharp public political and judicial dispute.

It is not completely a coincidence that our trial opens in the context of the sharpening public debate on the question of an international peace conference for the Middle East. One of the objectives of the law was to curtail and truncate the public discussion on the various options for peace. Today, the concept of an international conference as a vital component of the peace process has been accepted by the majority of the Israeli public. While we have no desire to embarrass the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Peres, it is clear that any international conference involves indirect and direct contact with the PLO, both on the formal and the informal levels. It is only those who are enamored with the status quo, despite its imminent dangers, who hope to eliminate the PLO from the peace equation. Thus, discussions between Israelis and Palestinians on the way to end mourning, violence and war are an essential element in the public democratic discussion on the paths to peace.

After twenty years of occupation and military rule over one and a half million Palestinian, without any semblance of democratic rights and processes; after the armed provocations of the settlers and the spawning of a full-fledged armed underground; after the



rampage by the Kahana gangs (pogroms in Jerusalem and an assault on the Israeli Supreme Court) – not to mention of the harassment campaign against the participants in the peace delegation to Romania – there are still those who, in the name of “even-handedness” blame the left for undermining the rule of law. This accusation is unfair and absurd. The peace forces reiterate their dedication to the democratic process and principles.

Latif Dori, Yael Lotan, Eliezer Feiler, Reuven Kaminer.

Ezer Weitzman Supports Negotiations With The PLO

Ezer Weitzman has come an astonishingly long way since the time he was an annexationist hawk and played a major role in Menachem Begin's electoral victory of 1977. Now a member of the Labor Party, Weitzman is, among mainstream Israeli politicians, the most committed to the idea of Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian peace. For a long time, Weitzman has been known to state in private his opinion that Israel should negotiate with the PLO; now he has made this position public. The following is an excerpt from a news item published in Yediot Aharonot on March 1, 1987.

Minister without portfolio Ezer Weitzman proposes that the Israeli government establish contacts with the PLO leadership. In his view, this is the only way to bring about a real advance towards peace in the region. At a series of meetings, Weitzman stated his view that nothing could be expected of King Hussein of Jordan. Any political move “must come in cooperation with Egypt and considering Egypt's influence on the PLO”. Militarily, Weitzman said, the PLO's power is negligible; but politically, it is the most important element with whom Israel should negotiate, more important even than Jordan.

Weitzman believes that the Labor party should take a risk and start acting since both Egypt and Jordan are sinking into economic crisis, while the United States is unable to take any political initiative, especially under the present

administration. “America will move only when there is an Israeli initiative” he said. “If it was up to me” Weitzman added “I would advise the Israeli government to take an initiative in the direction of the PLO. It is possible to talk with them and even make a cease-fire agreement with them; this was already proved in 1981*. Otherwise, somebody else may take control on the Palestinian side. This could start an escalation which may end with the entire Middle East blowing up. This could happen even before the end of the century, if peace is not achieved.”

Weitzman said that he is willing to conduct personally the contacts with Arafat or other PLO leaders, but that his hands are tied by his membership in the cabinet. He believes that the contacts should be started in a discreet way, as were Israeli-Egyptian contacts previous to Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977.

The Alternative Information Centre closed by police

Since it was established in 1985, the “Alternative Information Centre” in West Jerusalem had become well-known among local and foreign journalists as an important source of information on events in the occupied territories; much of that information was not available elsewhere. At Israeli embassies around the globe, the officials charged with explaining and justifying government policies had embarrassing moments, when they were asked to comment on various incidents described in the Information Centre's publication, “News From Within”.

On February 16, 1987, a large number of policemen, accompanied by members of the Israeli security services, descended upon the Alternative Information Centre. The office was closed down and all equipment and papers confiscated, by order of the chief of the Israeli police, David Kraus. The closure order, issued according to the chief's authority under the 1948 “Anti-Terrorist Act”, read:

“On the basis of information brought before me I have become convinced that, in the place known as ‘The Alternative Information Centre’, activity is taking place in favor of the terrorist organization ‘The Popular Front for The Liberation of Palestine’. This activity includes the printing and distribution



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* In July 1981, Israel agreed indirectly to a de facto cease-fire with the PLO, ending a protracted series of air-raids and missile bombardments on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanese border. The PLO kept its part of the agreement, but Sharon and Begin broke it in June 1982 by invading Lebanon. One of their main motives was the fear that the cease-fire agreement would develop into peace negotiations, which might have led to Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the creation of a Palestinian state.



of hostile and illegal publications of that terrorist organization, the receiving of information from the terrorist organization's activists inside and outside the country and the distribution of it among the terrorist organization's activists. Because of the above facts, I hereby order the closure of the place for six months, starting on February 16, 1987". None of the alleged evidence backing these charges was disclosed; the "Anti-Terrorist Act" gives the police chief complete authority to close down, at his discretion, any place which he claims "was used for the purposes of a terrorist organization".

The Centre's director, Michael Warshawski, was detained and charged by the police with "aiding a terrorist organization". These charges were based on alleged information provided by Israeli agents in the "Popular Front for The Liberation of Palestine". Additionally, the police cited some of the Arabic documents published by the Information Centre, such as leaflets calling upon inhabitants of the West Bank to persist in opposing the occupation, or a manual describing the interrogation methods of the Israeli security services and preparing prospective Palestinian prisoners for what they may expect. As the charge sheet put it, "this manual is intended to educate the Popular Front's members. It briefs them on how to stand incarceration and face the security services' interrogation and is intended to steel their spirits during the various stages of detention (. . .) Thus, the manual's aim is to hinder and frustrate the security services in the execution of their duties". Another charge against Warshawski was the publication of two illegal Arab newspapers, about which it was stated that "though they don't directly incite to terrorist activity, they do lay the ideological groundwork upon which the Popular Front's operational aims can later be furthered."

The police raid on the Information Centre shocked many in the peace movement. Michael Warshawski is well known for his indefatigable political activity, extending over two decades. He participated in the formation of nearly every coalition or action committee, such as "The Committee of Solidarity with Bir-Zeit University", "The Committee Against The Lebanon War", and many others. Many peace activists had, and continue to have, serious political differences with the positions taken by Warshawski and his organization, the Trotskyist "Revolutionary Communist League"; but to those who know him, an allegation that Warshawski is "a terrorist" cannot but appear ridiculous and preposterous. For several weeks following his arrest, activists of many groups and organizations held daily vigils in front of the Jerusalem police headquarters, where he was held.

Public concern was especially widespread over the police chief's closure order. In the occupied territories, including annexed East Jerusalem, arbitrary closures of newspapers, press agencies or universities are a regular occurrence; the closure of the Alternative Information Centre introduces the use of the same methods within the boundaries of

Israel proper, and against an institution run by a Jewish Israeli – proving once again that democratic rights are indivisible, and that repression, once used, tends to spread beyond the original victims.

Various groups and individuals have become aware of the dangerous precedent established. The Israeli Civil Rights Association and The Jerusalem Journalists' Union have come out in opposition to the closure; so did the Israeli Radio's erudite commentator, Moshe Negbi, who presents a weekly program on legal affairs. On March 5, a petition appeared in Ha'aretz, demanding that the Centre be immediately re-opened; the 108 signatories represented a wide range of peace activists and public figures. Meanwhile, the police asked the Jerusalem District Court to remand Warshawski in custody until the end of his trial – a procedure usually reserved for serious crimes. Judge Ya'akov Bazak, known for his leniency towards extreme-right, anti-Arab terrorists, granted the police's request. However, on appeal to the Supreme Court, Warshawski was released on bail, after spending 32 days in detention. He still faces a difficult trial of a clearly political nature, and the Information Centre remains closed. "The Other Israel" will keep its readers informed on further developments in this affair.

Chronicles of The Peace Struggle

29/1 – Members of the Women's Committee for Peace and Equality picketed the Defence Ministry in Tel-Aviv, to protest the military authorities' treatment of Siham Barguty, a West Bank woman. A year ago, her husband was deported to Jordan. She is being denied permission to visit him; such permission is made conditional upon her agreeing not to come back for three years. This is one of the methods by which the military authorities attempt to force the entire families of deported Palestinians to leave the occupied territories.

29/1-9/2 – The Vanunu affair had caused in Israel a growing concern over the issue of nuclear armament. Mordechai Vanunu's detailed eye-witness testimony makes it more and more difficult to doubt that Israel does possess nuclear arms – despite the government's denials. Within a short time, two committees concerned with this issue were formed.

A moderate group, dealing with the question of nuclear armament on a half-political, half-academic level, held a public meeting in Tel-Aviv, with the participation of a wide range of speakers, including even Yerucham Meshel, a former Secretary-General of the Histadrut trade-union federation, who had rarely before made public statements on other than trade-union issues.

A far more radical group, known as "The Committee against Nuclear Holocaust" and including two of Mordechai Vanunu's brothers, came out openly in defence of Vanunu's rights, publishing a petition condemning Vanunu's kidnapping in Italy and stating: "Without agreeing



to Vanunu's alleged acts, in our view the act of tearing the veil of secrecy which covers Israel's nuclear armament is a vital service to the security and well-being of the inhabitants of this country and of the whole region (. . .) there is no "Vanunu Affair"; the true affairs are the desperate attempts to distract the Israeli public from facing the existence of dozens of nuclear warheads, upon which no control, local or international, is exercised."

This committee also held a demonstration in Jerusalem, to protest Mordechai Vanunu's conditions of imprisonment. Michael Warshawski and other workers of the Alternative Information Centre played an active part in this committee; that may have been one reason for the police crackdown on the Centre. (See separate article.)

7/2 - In the Arab town of Um-el-Fahm, a large demonstration took place in protest against the Interior Ministry, which holds up the funds promised to the Um-el-Fahm municipality. The Arab municipalities in Israel regularly run up against the frankly discriminatory and racist attitudes of the Interior Ministry bureaucracy, which often holds up even the funds formally approved by higher echelons for these municipalities.

8/2 - Nuri el-Ukbi, head of the Beduin Rights Defence Association and a member of the Progressive List for Peace (PLP) was interrogated for several hours by the Israeli security services, who asked him about his political views and activities, about the activities of the PLP, about alleged "subversive elements" working among the Negev beduins, and about el-Ukbi's recent visit to Norway, where he had given several interviews to the press, expressing opinions critical of official Israeli policies.

Nuri el-Ukbi also faces a trial on charges of illegally entering an area in the Negev held by the Israeli Army, from which a Beduin tribe was being forcibly evicted and its herds confiscated.

Knesset Member Matti Peled sent a sharp protest to Prime Minister Shamir, demanding to stop the security services' harassment of el-Ukbi and other Arab members of the PLP.

10/2 - Inhabitants of Tzur-Baher, an Arab village near East Jerusalem which was annexed to Israel in 1967, demonstrated against the Jewish National Fund's plans to confiscate 1000 acres of land, uproot the olive trees which grow on it and replace them with cypress trees. Remarkably, the demonstration also included Israelis living in the nearby Jewish neighborhood of Armon ha-Natziv, which was itself built on land confiscated from the Tzur-Baher villagers. Their motive for participation was not political but ecological, since they believe that olive trees look better and are more suitable for this area than cypresses.

11/12 - Anton Shamas, a well-known Arab writer who has a regular column in two large-circulation Hebrew newspapers, has attracted the attention of Kahane's racist thugs after writing an article condemning a racist statement by

Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, who had said: "I don't want Arabs to live in my street".

During the night, racist slogans and threats, such as "Dirty Arab, Kahane will take care of you", were written on the walls of Shamas' house in Jerusalem. The incident received a lot of publicity in the press. Many Jewish writers and artists publicly expressed their solidarity with Shamas; Mayor Kollek hastened to visit Shamas' home, expressing his shock, apologising for and retracting the original statement which started the whole affair. The police, however, were unable to find the vandals.

13/2 - In Jerusalem, 5,000 Israeli and Palestinian youth took part in a large-scale distribution of leaflets, in Hebrew and Arabic, condemning extremism and racism. About 50,000 leaflets were distributed in all parts of West and East Jerusalem. The initiative for this action was taken by a coalition of 12 youth movements and slum-dwellers' organizations, in response to the distribution of Kahane's leaflets, calling for the expulsion of Arabs.

16/2 - In Tel-Aviv, Yitzchak Laor's new play, "Requiem for A Small Revolution" was presented. The play, which contains strong autobiographical notes, describes the struggle of an Israeli peace activist who returns from a long stay abroad to find himself on trial for having participated in the first demonstration against the Lebanon War.

- The Ratz Youth held a demonstration in Jerusalem, to protest against Israel's ties with the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

16/2-6/3 - Every day, vigils took place in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv to protest the closure of the Alternative Information Centre. (See separate article.) In Tel-Aviv, the demonstrators picketed the headquarters of the Labor Party - the party of Police Minister Bar-Lev, who bears ministerial responsibility for the closure order.

19/2 - At the Orient House Hotel in East Jerusalem, a large public meeting between Israelis and Palestinians took place. Most of the Israelis were members of the delegation which had met with PLO representatives in Romania; the Palestinians included a wide range of political activists, lecturers and students from West Bank universities, trade unionists, doctors, lawyers and engineers (since openly political organizations are prohibited in the occupied territories, professional associations often assume a political role).

20/2 - More than 20 of Israel's foremost singers, Jews and Arabs, joined together in singing a new peace song, written especially for this occasion, saying: "You and I are close/ so similar, so much a family/ This house is yours and mine/ we are together, without fear./ We say peace, we want peace, we sing peace/ Peace will come".

The performance was sponsored by the Israeli Television, which broadcast it as part of one of the most popular entertainment shows. Given the nature of this initiative, the artists could not quote any specific solution for achieving peace; they talked about peace in general terms. Nevertheless, with the growing manifestations of anti-Arab



racism in various parts of Israeli society, this public display of Jewish-Arab cooperation has a great significance.

22/2 - A group organised by the extreme-right Techiyah ("Revival") party broke into the Cameri theatre in Tel-Aviv and attempted to break up the presentation of the play "A Palestinian Woman", which describes the life of an Arab girl growing up in Israel, her political and personal struggles, and her tragic love affair with a Jewish man. The rightists, shouting "This is PLO theatre, we will stop it!" held up the play for almost an hour. A group of peace activists confronted them, calling "Fascism will not pass!" Finally, the police arrived to evict the hooligans, and the play resumed.

The playwright, Yehoshua Sobol, said: "The best answer to the rightist violence is the fact that 160,000 people have already seen the play, and the hall is still packed every evening".

21/3 - In Kafr-Quasem, a large Arab village, a demonstration took place to protest the demolition of an "illegal" house by the Interior Ministry. Village inhabitants erected a temporary brick structure for the family, on the site of the destroyed house.

Self-Determination and "Territorial Compromise"

On February 12, 1987 the International Center for Peace in the Middle East (ICPME) published an advertisement calling on all parties to the Israeli-Arab conflict to declare 1987 to be "the year of peace" and agree to the establishment of a peace settlement based on "territorial compromise and self determination". Such a peace, the ad stated, "will guarantee Israel's security, the realization of the Palestinians' aspirations and the stability of the region". A list of signatures concluded the ad, with the conspicuous absence of Knesset Members.

It was soon found out that the failure to include Knesset Members in the list of supporters was due to the fact that MK Abba Eban would not sign a statement recognizing the principle of self determination, which is not included in the Labor Party's platform. So, rather than demonstrate the non-acceptance of the principle by a prominent member of the Labor party's group of doves, the ICPME organisers had decided not to ask any MK to sign the ad.

On March 4, another ad appeared in the press, paid for by the ICPME, with a list of signatories urging the public to "support" the ICPME's ad of February 12. This list consisted of present and past MK's including Mr. Eban who, though not willing himself to sign the original ad, felt able to urge others to do so. The signatories were drawn from a number of parties, but the names of past and present MKs associated with the Progressive List for Peace (PLP) were conspicuously absent. Though

several such MKs are themselves members of the ICPME, they were excluded from the proceedings, and none of them was even approached by the ICPME organisers, who collected the signatures.

This was not accidental. Since such matters never remain secret for long, it was soon found out that prominent figures among the Labor MK's vetoed the participation of PLP members. Among them were Uzi Baram, the Labor party's secretary-general, Rafi Edri, who is both the leader of the Labor parliamentary faction and the parliamentary coordinator of the Labor-Likud "National Unity" coalition, and Nava Arad, a prominent Labor dove. Ironically, the Laborites could have saved themselves all these secret manoeuvres and behind-the-scenes pressures, by the simple expedient of openly approaching the PLP.

After analysing the text of the February 12 advertisement, the PLP had already decided that it could not support it. In the PLP's view, it is a self-defeating document, trying to reconcile two irreconcilable principles: self-determination and "territorial compromise". It should be remembered that, in the Israeli context, the term "territorial compromise" has a very definite political meaning. For almost two decades, the Labor party uses this term as a codeword designating its territorial program. This program, based on the well-known "Alon Plan", stipulates the colonization and eventual annexation to Israel of wide slices of the occupied territories. On the remaining parts of the territories, Jordanian rule is to be imposed, regardless of the Palestinian inhabitants' own desires or wishes. Thus, it is clear that "territorial compromise" is totally incompatible with self-determination.

Despite its opposition to the ICPME statement, the PLP decided in February not to issue any denunciation or counter-statement. This was done out of a feeling of responsibility, regarding the ICPME efforts as an attempt, even if a lame one, to widen the group supporting President Mubarak's idea of making 1987 the year of peace.

After the full details of the Labor Party's manoeuvrings and schemes have come out, the ICIPP (Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace) felt it necessary to clarify the matter. A special committee was formed for this discussion, in which Dr. Yaa'kov Arnon of the ICIPP was a member, together with David Shaham, an ICPME organiser, Labor Knesset Members Ora Namir and Aharon Har'el, and Aryeh Yafen of Mapam. At the committee meeting, Dr. Arnon Asked the ICPME representatives to put an end to the exclusion of the PLP MK's, some of whom were among the ICPME's founding members. The ICPME representatives refused to do so; they stated, quite frankly, that some Labor doves do not agree to have their names appear together with those of PLP members. In the ICPME's opinion, the ICIPP and the PLP should accept this situation, in the interest of recruiting more support in the Labor Party ranks.



On March 25 the ICIPP executive, after hearing Dr. Arnon's report, could see no other course for its members than withdrawing from membership in the ICPME. This step was taken reluctantly; the ICIPP had participated in setting up the ICPME, and had, in the past, invested considerable efforts and resources in helping its growth. However the ICPME, intended as an umbrella organization for the entire Israeli Peace Camp, had become an organization in which the Labor Party holds an absolute veto power – a power which is openly used to exclude the PLP. There was, thus, no choice but to leave the framework of this organizations.

Aspects of The Dialogue

On January 22, 1987, the ICIPP held a public meeting in Tel-Aviv, on the occasion of the publication of Uri Avnery's book, "My Friend, The Enemy".* In talking of this book, which describes the development of the dialogue between the Israeli Peace Camp and the PLO, the speakers discussed various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, its past history and its future prospects.

The opening speaker was Knesset Member Matti Peled, who emphasized the importance of dialogue, which alone enables the two sides to understand each other. Through dialogue, the Palestinians learn about the heterogenous composition of Israeli society, and the many hues of the Israeli political spectrum and of Israeli public opinion; the Israelis, on their part, get to know the structure of the PLO, the internal struggles between its constituent organizations, and the complexities of Palestinian public opinion – as varied as the Israeli one. Matti Peled remarked that the saying "Know thy enemy" has a wide currency in Israel, but in many cases it is meant simply as an exhortation to gather intelligence on the enemy, the better to defeat him. Engaging in dialogue gives this saying a deeper meaning: "Know thy enemy, that you may know how to make him a friend".

Uri Avnery, the next speaker, talked of the psychological barriers which obstruct the achievement of peace. It is becoming clearer and clearer that there can be no solution but the creation of a Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel; at least in theory, most of the world accepts this solution; yet in practice, its implementation is still far off.

In Avnery's view, one of the main obstacles is the imponderable question of justice, which goes beyond the need for a practical, political solution. The Palestinians demand an Israeli admission that the creation of Israel involved injustice to the Palestinian people. Even though no Palestinian now believes that this injustice can be set right by the expulsion of three million Israelis, still they want Israel to admit its historical responsibility for the generations of suffering inflicted on the

Palestinians.

On the Israeli side, however, this very demand arouses strong resistance. Many of the Israelis who insist on a Palestinian recognition of "Israel's right to exist", want from the Palestinians something more than simple acceptance of the fact that Israel exists; they want an assurance that Israel was created *by right*. The unwillingness to admit that the glorious Zionist movement had done an injustice to the Palestinians is a deep national trauma in Israel. It had led to assertions that the Palestinians "do not exist", or to attempts to set up the Hashemite Kings of Jordan as "surrogate Palestinians", with whom it is possible to deal on a purely practical level.

Avnery summed up by reiterating the importance of the dialogue, stating that the initiators of the Anti-Peace Law have paid the dialogue's participants a big compliment; no government would bother to prohibit a thing which it considers to be insignificant and ineffective.

Ibrahim Karain, editor of the East Jerusalem "Al-Auda" weekly magazine examined the history of the dialogue, making a critical comparison between the different Palestinian participants. He emphasized the asymmetry of the dialogue, in which there are, on the Israeli side, private individuals opposed to their government's policy, while the Palestinian side is represented by officials of the PLO, including the highest levels of the organization's leadership.

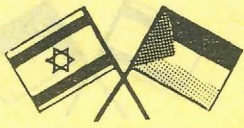
In Karain's view, Dr. Issam Sartawi had been too optimistic about the possible immediate effects of a PLO recognition of Israel; Karain regards such hopes as an illusion. On the other hand Said Hamami, in his contacts with Israelis, was more cautious, thinking more of long-term than immediate results.

While not believing that a unilateral step by the PLO would bring about a change in Israeli or American policy, Karain called for a continuation of the dialogue, with the participants having no illusions, knowing that it is a long and difficult process, but also knowing that there is no other way.

The last speaker was Chaim Shor, editor of "New Outlook". He agreed with Karain that, as far as the Israeli government is concerned, a decision by the PLO to unilaterally recognise Israel will not, in the short term, bring about a reciprocal recognition by Israel; Prime Minister Shamir had clearly stated that he would not recognise the PLO, even if the PLO were to accept UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. However, a unilateral step by the Palestinians may have a far-reaching effect on Israeli society, and may change the balance between the different political currents. The Israeli peace camp has a hard core, steadfastly committed under all circumstances, which had maintained the dialogue with the Palestinians over many years. Now, the dialogue should be extended.

Chaim Shor expressed his opposition to the view, current among parts of the moderate peace

* Available from Zed Press Ltd., 57 Caledonian Rd., London N1 9 BU, England.



camp, that Israelis should make dialogue with the PLO conditional upon PLO recognition of Israel; he also voiced opposition to those who wish to confine "Palestinian self-determination" within the bounds of "a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation", clearly stating that a "self-determination" which does not include the option of complete independence is meaningless.

In summation, it can be said that all speakers, each in his own way, shared the feeling that with the Anti-Peace Law the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue has entered a new and different phase, placing new challenges before its participants.

An International Peace Conference – Solution or Smoke Screen?

Recently the cleft between the two major components of the Israeli government, concerning a possible International Peace Conference on the Middle East, came into the open. The Israeli Labor Party and its allies strongly advocate (on their very strict terms) such a conference and accuse their Israeli opponents of "killing the peace process" and of manoeuvring Israel's diplomacy into an inferior position. The Likud bloc, for its part, accuses the partisans of an "International Peace Conference" of surrendering Israel's territorial achievements and of leading towards the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

Is this conflict a real one? Is such a conference a real possibility, or is it merely a smoke screen which has nothing to do with any actual peace process?

There does exist, of course, a simple way to by-pass the necessity for such a conference: if Israel would declare that it accepts the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and is ready to negotiate with the established Palestinian leadership (i.e. the PLO) and to withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967; and if, simultaneously, the PLO would declare its acceptance of the State of Israel's right to live in peace and security. In such a case, direct Israeli – PLO negotiations could be initiated without delay and an International Peace Conference might become superfluous. However, that is not the case: both sides are unwilling to give in on those essential points, either for substantial or tactical reasons, and no negotiations can be started. An International Conference is, thus, necessary. Moreover, such a conference would enable more Arab countries (such as Syria) to take part in the negotiations and give additional backing for any Arab concessions that might be necessary. Another advantage is that the involvement of big powers, such as the Soviet Union, would make these powers responsible for the maintenance of any settlement (which would be comprehensive, whether final or temporary) and terminate the undesirable total American monopoly over the Israeli-Arab relations.

In part of the Israeli Peace Camp there exists the notion that such a conference is illusory because the United States would never agree to Soviet participation in the peace process. However,

in a time of detente, which we seem to approach in the Gorbachev era (despite Reagan's reluctance) it might become extremely difficult for the United States to oppose Soviet participation, especially if accompanied by Soviet concessions in other disputed areas throughout the world. But even if such an understanding between the two superpowers would fail, an American concession towards the so-called "moderate" Arab states may be desirable, from Washington's point of view, after these states were annoyed by the Iranian arms deal.

Even so, many real obstacles stand in the way of such a conference. The opposition of the rightist, nationalist wing of the Israeli government, headed by Prime Minister Shamir, is strong and stubborn. Moreover, the Labor positions are also unrealistic and bound to foil any real advances, especially Labor's rejection of any PLO representation. Though the PLO has agreed to conduct some negotiations through non-official Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, this was intended only for the preliminary talks with US representatives, prior to the International Peace Conference itself. The PLO still insists on being represented at such a conference, at least as part of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation or as part of a united Arab League delegation, should such a delegation be established. Furthermore, to overcome the obstacles, the PLO and Jordan must reach some agreement, but the contradictions between them are real and enormous; their strong mutual distrust will certainly handicap any progress. Finally, it is quite clear that the Soviet Union will not content itself with the merely ceremonial role which Shimon Peres reserves for it; the Soviet will certainly demand for themselves a substantial function in future proceedings.

To sum up, it is the opinion of this writer that Israeli peace partisans should continue to demand mutual Israeli-PLO recognition and the opening of negotiations aimed at the establishment of two states, next to each other, living in peace and security. But at the same time we should welcome an International Peace Conference acceptable to all prospective participants, if such a proposal should have real chances.

Israel Loeff

Israel, American Jewry and the Pollard Affair

This article originally appeared, in a slightly different form, in Ha'olam Ha'zeh on March 18, 1987.

Even the worst trouble can have some positive results. This is especially true of the Pollard Affair.

The Pollard Affair is an astonishing mixture of ugly deeds, deception and treachery. Looking at it, it is difficult to see where crime ends and sheer idiocy begins; but the Pollard Affair may have some positive results. Two great Jewish communities – in



Israel and in the United States – have been forced, at a long overdue last, to face each other and see each other as they truly are.

For more than 39 years, there was a tacit agreement between the Jews in Israel and in America not to tell each other the truth about their mutual relationship, to cover it all up by pious platitudes.

By mutual consent, a fiction was created: The fiction that there is no difference between the two communities. All of us are Jews, all of us are Zionists, we all love and serve Israel. There is no difference between a Jew in Tel-Aviv and one living in Los Angeles. A Jew paying taxes in Jerusalem and a Jew contributing money to Israel from New York, a Jewish lieutenant in the Israeli Defence Forces and one serving in the U.S. Army are all the same.

Both sides liked this fiction very much. It meant that American Jews had to contribute money to Israel and exert their influence in the American media and political system on her behalf. American Jews, for their part, could have the best of two worlds: living in the flesh in the world's richest country, while sharing emotionally the victories and achievements of a heroic small state at the edge of the Mid-Eastern deserts.

The ones who liked it most were those Israelis who chose to move from Tel-Aviv to New-York, and who could do so while staying good Jews and good Zionists (especially if they happened to be rich).

Everybody liked this fiction; it made everybody feel comfortable; but it was, nevertheless, a fiction. This fiction could exist only through another fiction, the one which stated that there is a total identity between the interests of the United States and those of Israel; not only a strong alliance, not only a marked overlap in mutual interests, but a total identity of ideals and values, of political, economic and strategic interests; an identity so total that whatever is good for the United States is good for Israel, and vice-versa.

Both sides liked this fiction, too. For Israel, it meant more and more American funds and American arms; not to mention the American nuclear umbrella and Washington's unstinted support for any new Israeli venture, however arrogant and outrageous it may be.

For the United States, this identity of interests meant that Israel was ever ready to serve Uncle Sam's interests at any "hot spot" on the face of the globe. No job was too dirty; Israel was willing to do everything, everywhere, which might embarrass Big Brother if he did it himself.

As a side benefit, individual American politicians could use Israel's influence in the American media and business community to further their private careers.

Everybody liked it: the Israeli and American governments, the politicians on both sides, the American Jews. Nevertheless this, too, was a fiction.

It is true that the American-Israeli symbiosis had created a situation apparently unprecedented in history: an alliance in which each side is very

deeply involved in the other's internal affairs.

The Israeli lobby has an enormous, almost decisive, influence on American politics. The United States has a very clearly and overwhelmingly decisive influence on Israeli politics, and on Israeli life in general.

Any American politician who offended Israel had, thereby, committed political suicide. The same was true of any Israeli politician who offended the United States, with "leftist" politicians fawning over America even more than their right-wing colleagues.

Thus, it is difficult to know who controls whom. Israel is, for all intents and purposes, an American colony – but the U.S. also seems, at times, to be an Israeli colony; on more than one occasion it looked like the Israeli tail was wagging the American dog.

All of these made it possible to believe that there is a complete identity between Israeli and American interests. This is a fiction, because it is quite impossible for two states' interests to be totally identical. A state's political, strategic and economic interests are determined by many factors, such as geographical location, size, the military and economic capacities of the state and of actual and potential enemies, and many other things. These factors are not, and cannot be, totally identical for any two states, however closely allied they may be. They are, very definitely, not identical in the case of Israel and the United States.

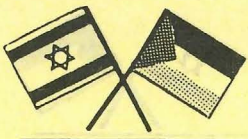
American interests and Israeli interest could overlap but could never be identical. *Therefore, American Jews could not have a total and equal loyalty to both states at one and the same time.* Sooner or later, the contradiction had to become apparent. It finally was made apparent – by Jonathan Pollard.

In the Tower Commission's report, Secretary of State Shultz is quoted as having warned, already at the start of the Irangate affair, that Israeli interests in Iran are not identical with American interests there. This was true in the case of Irangate. It was, very obviously, true in the case of Pollard. It is true in each and every case.

Thus, it is impossible for American Jews who are loyal to their country to totally identify themselves with the interests of Israel. The fiction that they can do so is the root cause of the Pollard Affair.

Once this fiction is torn apart, a completely different reality is revealed. There exists a Jewish community in Israel, which constitutes the Hebrew (or Jewish-Israeli) Nation; and there exists a big Jewish community in the United States. These two big sections of the Jewish people have a very strong affinity, but a clear line separates them. Each one of them develops, and will continue to develop, in a separate way under different conditions; the gap between them will, therefore, inevitably widen. This is not just a gap between different political interests and loyalty to two different states. There are deeper, social and cultural differences, which are usually ignored.

The Jewish-Israeli nation is becoming



increasingly Oriental, both demographically and culturally. Jews from Islamic countries are a growing majority among the citizens of Israel. This already influences Israeli culture and society, and will influence them ever more deeply in the future. American Jewry, on the other hand, is almost purely Ashkenazi, of mainly East European origin.

Among American Jews, religion has a major role in society. It is predominately a tolerant and liberal religion, mostly of the Reform or Conservative variety. In Israel, the Jewish religion is almost totally Orthodox, and it is becoming yearly more primitive, fundamentalist, fanatic and obscurantist.

For American Jews, religion is a unifying factor, the basic element of belonging to the Jewish community. Their Synagogue is more a social than a religious institution. In Israel, religion lost this role, which was taken over by the symbols of nationalism: the state, the society, the language and culture, the army. Religion in Israel is, on the contrary, a disunifying factor, with the hostility between religious and secular Jews growing stronger.

Among American Jews, the number of converts to Judaism is growing, reaching hundreds of thousands. Through mixed marriages the Jewish community loses some members, but this is counterbalanced by the spouses who convert and join the Jewish community. For American Jews, conversion is a central issue. In Israel, on the contrary, the number of converts to Judaism is negligible, a handful of immigrants. By and large, Israeli Jews were born Jews, and except for a few fanatic rabbis, are not interested in the problems and implications of conversion.

More examples can be brought to show that, with time, Jews in Israel and in America will increasingly develop differences in culture, in outlook, in interests.

The same is true for a third significant Jewish community - the one in the Soviet Union. Only a small part of the Soviet Jews want to emigrate, and most of these want to go to the United States, rather than to Israel. Millions of Jews stay, and will stay, in the Soviet Union; they too are developing in a direction of their own, which has to be recognised and respected.

* * *

Jonathan Pollard is the victim of the fictions upon which he was brought up. Neither the Israeli nor the American-Jewish establishment have the right to be accuse him. These two establishments have taught him that by serving Israel's security interests he does not harm American interests, since the two are identical; that, as a Jew, his first duty is to serve Israel; that this is the duty of all Jews everywhere. Didn't the Knesset, in a fit of stupidity and arrogance, enact into Israeli law the axiom that "Israel is the State of the Jewish People" and not the state of its own citizens?

The Pollards have revealed many secrets, but the

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most important secret which they unwittingly laid bare is that of the relations between Israel and American Jewry.

Uri Avnery

Zionism, Judaism and the State of Israel

The State of Israel, the creation of which was meant to "normalize" the Jewish people, seems now, after nearly four decades of political independence, to be less of a "normal" entity than it was in the 1950s or early 60s.

The outcome of the 1967 war cast a doubtful shadow on Israel's geographic boundaries. The outcome of the intense Zionist activities since then has been an equally doubtful shadow upon the demographic boundaries of the state. The "Law of Return" – to which no time-limit has ever been proposed – means that people all over the world who regard themselves as Jews, whether by birth or conversion, are automatically held to be potential citizens of Israel. Immediately after World War II this made sense. The survivors of the Nazi campaign to exterminate the Jews were in no doubt – and neither was anyone else – that they were marked as Jews, and as such were in need of a secure national home of their own, the "gentile" world having failed to protect them from their mortal enemies. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, Jews in the Islamic world also felt threatened, and many of them flocked to what was projected as their revived ancestral homeland.

But decades have passed, and the overwhelming majority of Jews, in the West as in the Eastern Bloc, have made no effort to immigrate to Israel, despite many inducements. Assimilation and inter-marriage with non-Jews are rapidly reducing the numbers of those who define their personal identity as Jewish. It is likely that in another 40 or 50 years there will be hardly any identifiable Jews outside Israel, except for some ultra-orthodox communities here and there.

One would have thought that this would be a desirable goal, a real solution to "The Jewish Problem", as envisioned by Theodore Herzl and other early leaders of political Zionism. But, paradoxically, the State of Israel and its Zionist spokesmen regard it with horror. The process is described by such egregious terms as "a demographic Holocaust" – as though the peaceful and voluntary assimilation of a minority group were tantamount to its physical annihilation.

The reason for this amazing distortion lies in the powerful vested interest that Israel has developed in the continued active existence of a Jewish "diaspora" – large, self-conscious Jewish communities outside Israel – as sources of material and political support, as well as reservoirs for additional immigration, to swell the ranks of Israelis, who view themselves as eternally beleaguered by the Arab world.

In deciding to open the pages of The Other Israel to discussion of the relations between Israel and Diaspora Jews – American Jews in particular – the editorial board was well aware that this is a sensitive issue, and that some readers may object to the views expressed. We would welcome any contribution to this discussion which, in our view, is important and highly relevant, both directly and indirectly, to the issue of Middle-Eastern peace.

Unable – or unwilling – to make peace with the neighboring countries, and thereby reduce the political and economic pressure on the country, the Israeli leadership must constantly play on the Jewish identity and identification with Israel among Jews the world over. Since there is little active antisemitism in the world today (and where there is, it does not necessarily lead to a Zionist solution), the Israeli establishment has taken to fanning Jewish religious sentiment as the bond which would supposedly bind the "diaspora" to Israel. This tendency is very marked, both inside Israel and in the dialogue between the state and the Jewish communities elsewhere. Thus, every synagogue is treated as an honorary Israeli consulate; if, as a result, it becomes a target for anti-Israeli sentiment, or actual violence, (as, in fact, happened in Tunisia, after the Israeli air-force attack on the PLO base there), so much the better for Zionism.

And so, as we approach the end of the fourth decade of Israeli independence, we see the state reverting rapidly from a political entity to a religious one – albeit armed to the teeth – with all the paranoid and exclusive features that characterized the old Jewish ghetto, or Mellah, or "Pale of Settlement". The resulting conflicts inside Israel, between the religious and the secular, the Jewish and the non-Jewish citizens, are the inevitable products of this policy.

The repeated provocations by extreme right-wingers on Temple Mount are a symptom of a lapse into ancient, primitive modes of conduct, by a society which has forgotten its original goal. It inescapably leads to analogies with the fate of the Jewish Commonwealth in the first century AD. The world has, of course, changed somewhat since the days of the Roman Empire, but this fact will scarcely protect Israel from the consequences of its atavistic behavior. Only a profound reappraisal of its identity and goals will do that. Time will show whether Israel is capable of such an undertaking.

Yael Lotan

* The Mellah was the name given to the Jewish quarters in Moroccan cities. "The Pale of Settlement" was the area of Czarist Russia, outside which Jews were forbidden to reside.