



The Other Israel

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for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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'IT CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS!'

"It can't go on like this!" was the headline of the Peace Now advertisements and leaflets, calling for participation in a Jerusalem demonstration held on December 8 - Intifada Day. After three years of Intifada, these words definitely express a feeling shared by Israelis and Palestinians of all creeds and political views. Fear has become the constant companion of all.

For the past three years, any Palestinian could, at any time of day or night, be hit by a bullet, arrested and beaten up by soldiers, or subjected to hours-long humiliations. Till recently, Israelis felt more or less immune. Daily fear entered their lives with the Gulf crisis and Saddam Hussein's threat to fire poison gas at Israel. People clamoured for gas masks - but by the time they were distributed, the fear of an apocalyptic war was pushed to the background by the more immediate threat of knives and bombs, unleashed by the Temple Mount massacre.

This brutal shooting by the Israeli police - on a site which is both holy to Islam and emotionally evocative to Palestinian nationalism - unleashed a savage backlash, bringing down many of the barriers which the Palestinian leadership painstakingly maintained till then. Individual Palestinians - mostly belonging to no organization - started making random attacks on Israelis, in the streets of Israeli cities, or at the industrial zones. Kitchen knives, hammers and a few home-made bombs were used - to lethal effect. Moreover, with the growing turmoil in the Middle East, caused by the Gulf crisis, citizens of Jordan and Egypt started infiltrating Israeli borders on hit-and-run attacks. Apparently, many of these, too, were not connected with any organization, though some militant Islamic organizations were quick to claim responsibility for their acts.

Among Israelis, there were reactions of hate and violence; mobs shouting "Death to the Arabs" have become a frequent occurrence. At the funeral of racist leader Rabbi Meir Kahane - assassinated in New York by an Arab-American - his followers rampaged through the streets of Jerusalem, nearly unchecked by police.

The primary target for the racists' violence are the Palestinian migrant workers - and sometimes, the Jews who employ them as well. In circumstances

where every Arab is regarded as a potential knifeman, the demand for "getting rid of Arab workers" is gaining a wide appeal, being repeated by many "respectable" Knesset Members and mayors.

However, in late October - when the government totally sealed the pre-'67 border to the passage of Palestinian workers - the experiment had to be stopped after a few days; it became clear that the Israeli economy cannot so easily replace the underpaid Arab workers - despite the influx of Soviet immigrants. Moreover, the government's own security experts warned of an extremely explosive situation, should 120,000 cast off workers be added to the - already numerous - penniless unemployed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the captive economy of the Occupied Territories, where government policies systematically prevent economic growth, there are no jobs available, nor do unemployment benefits exist.

Prominent members of the peace movement are also a target of threats and sometimes of violence. After a Palestinian killed three residents of Bak'a neighborhood in Jerusalem, a mob tried to storm the nearby home of Peace Now spokesperson Amiram Gelblum. In such a situation, it is not simple to let a call for dialogue and reconciliation be heard. Nevertheless, the Israeli rightists are, fundamentally, in even deeper problems.

The situation of continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has become manifestly untenable and intolerable. The extreme right's solution - mass deportation of all Arabs - is not only immoral but also impracticable. Even if really attempted, it would not be so easy to let the army carry out such a controversial operation against a population hardened in three years of mass rebellion. Furthermore, the Israeli Jewish society would be violently torn apart, at the same time that the international community would be united in anger and condemnation of such an act.

By way of elimination, the only course open to Israel is to withdraw from the Occupied Territories; more and more Israelis, who do not at all share the ideals of the peace movement, are reluctantly coming to this conclusion.

Tel-Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat, of the ruling Likud

Party, may be the harbinger of new trends. On one and the same day – December 15 – Lahat visited the volatile slums of South Tel-Aviv, where mobs assaulted Arabs, in retaliation for the recent murder of three Israelis – and addressed a gathering at the Arab town Tyra, where thousands of Jews and Arabs came together, in an effort to show that dialogue is still possible.

Appearing on the same evening on the Israeli television news, he advocated the introduction of death penalty for “cruel murder”, and the closing of the “Green Line” border for Arabs from the Territories who want to work in Israel. But he also demanded that alternative employment be provided for them in the Territories themselves and stated that in the long run *there can be no solution without sitting down, talking with the Palestinians and letting them have their own state.*

The solution advocated so many years by the peace movement – creation of a Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel – might really come about. However, the path seems to lead through much pain and bloodshed, leaving behind a legacy of bitterness and hatred.

At least some of the worst can be avoided by prompt and vigorous international action. Together with the increasing chances for a negotiated solution to the Gulf crisis, there are signs that the U.S. administration is beginning to accept the idea of an international conference for peace in the Middle East. The quicker such a conference is convened, the more innocent lives – Jewish and Arab – may be saved.

The editor

A hard world

On a night in April 1987, a few months before the Intifada, a young Palestinian stood in ambush near the road leading to the Jewish settlement of Alfey-Menashe, established on formerly Palestinian-owned land in the West Bank. When a car approached, he threw a molotov cocktail; the car, driven by settler Abie Moses, caught fire; Moses' wife and their eight year old son were burned to death, and Abie Moses spent many months in hospital. Ofra Moses and her child Tal were counted among “the martyrs of the Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria”, and became a symbol for all those who believe in the Iron Fist policy towards Palestinians.

In the midst of the present cycle of bloodshed, Abie Moses chose to speak out himself. The following is taken from his *Hadashot* interview (7.12.'90):

“On my way to work, I pass the place where it happened. I can never forget it. But I don't hate the Arabs. I hate the man who did it, but not the Arabs in general. When his trial was taking place at the Nablus military court, I went there every day. Every day I passed through the Nur-A-Shams and Balata Refugee Camps. Have you ever been there? Do you know how these people live? Who can live under such conditions without becoming desperate?”

“I came to Israel from India, at the age of 16. From my childhood, I remember what Mahatma Gandhi said: The word is the strongest weapon in the world. We must talk with them. What happened to me and to my family, that was fate. We live in a hard world. If it was up to me, I would talk with anybody who

wants to talk with us about peace, and I would be willing to make compromises. It is a hard world, and in order to live in such a world, we must learn how to compromise.

Intifada anniversary

■ On Sunday December 9, the Palestinian uprising in the Occupied Territories entered its fourth year. Correctly anticipating that the army would impose a comprehensive curfew on that date, the Palestinians held numerous demonstrations, marking the anniversary, already on December 7.

In Israel, too, several demonstrations were held on December 7, the most significant being a human chain of Jews and Arabs across downtown Haifa, calling for a peaceful solution and an end to bloodshed. Also, attendance at the vigils of the Women in Black and Yesh G'vul – held on this as on all Fridays – was bigger than usual. On the evening, a mass torchlight procession passed through the streets of Nazareth, organised by the Communist Party.

■ On the evening of December 8, thousands of Peace Now supporters spread out along the streets leading to the Jerusalem residence of Prime Minister Shamir. They held signs *It can't go on like this! Put an end to the cycle of bloodshed!*, calling upon the Prime Minister – at this time, on a visit to the United States – to take account of public opinion polls showing that 70% of the population has had enough and wants to get out of the Territories.

Three hundred sixty five of the demonstrators formed a “living calendar”, each one holding a giant page enumerating the clashes

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on that day of the past year, and the names of that day's victims – mostly Arab, sometimes Jewish.

■ Long before dawn on December 9, large military forces spread out and imposed a curfew over the whole of the Gaza Strip and large parts of the West Bank, altogether sealing more than a million people in their homes. Despite this enforced "calm", the day claimed two young lives.

At Bani-Suhila Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip, Muhammad Muradi El-Madani attacked a border policeman bare-handed, and was shot to death. (A younger brother of Muhammad had been killed by soldiers several months before, the bereaved parents told the press.)

In Bethlehem, an explosive device went off near the military government headquarters; when soldiers arrived to investigate, a second device went off, killing paratrooper Guy Friedman.

■ On that very day, December 9, there were several more commemorations inside Israel. A large rally was held by students and lecturers in Tel-Aviv University; members of Yesh G'vul picketed the Defence Ministry, holding placards *Father, what are you doing in the Territories?* together with the picture of a little wounded Palestinian girl, and calling for withdrawal of the army from the territories.

In front of the Prime Minister's office, members of several peace groups held a day-long sit-in, with discussions on whether to call upon soldiers' to refuse military service in the Occupied Territories (which is a step beyond supporting the individuals who feel compelled to do so for reasons of private conscience). Another subject was the need for international protection of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories.

The press coverage gave special attention to the participation of three religious leaders: Rabbi Menachem Furman, a "dissident" West Bank settler*; Sheikh Abdallah Nimer of the Islamic Movement; and the Jerusalem Melkite Archbishop Lutfi Laham. All three emphasized the need of talking between the two peoples, and the need to preserve the Shape of God which is in every human being.

* Furman had already aroused the anger of fellow-settlers by meeting with Palestinian leader Feisal Hussein. For more details, see TOI-38, p.8,9.

■ December 10 is the International Human Rights Day. In the Israeli peace camp this day has become part of the "Intifada-anniversary week". This year's meetings were also marked by the concern over the increasing racism towards Arab workers. The most significant event took place at 6.30 P.M. when some 500 youngsters, holding candles and placards, marched from Tel-Aviv to Jaffa, chanting slogans such as: *Jewish-Arab brotherhood! – Fascism will not pass! – Israel and Palestine – Two States for Two Peoples!* etc.

The march had been organized by an unprecedented broad coalition which included the Labor-affiliated youth movement as well as the Communists and many youths "in between".

■ On December 12, an Intifada Day rally was held at the campus of the Hebrew University on mount Scopus. There, the Intifada is a very concrete issue: students see clashes regularly between police and inhabitants of the Isawiyeh village, less than a kilometre away in the valley under the mountain.

The participants in the rally emptied two bags containing a blood-like red substance on the university lawn and let them mix, declaring: *Jewish blood and Arab blood are both the same!* The university administration announced that the organisers will be punished for this "unauthorised spilling of blood" (*sic!*).

Imprisonment and dialogue

Feisal Hussein, Raduan Abu-Ayash, Ziad Abu-Ziad, Sari Nusseibeh and other prominent Palestinian leaders from the Occupied Territories have made, in the past three years, hundreds of public appearances in front of Israeli audiences. On October 13, Feisal Hussein was due to participate in a public meeting in Haifa, together with Mapam Knesset Member Ya'ir Tzaban. It was organised by

the "Tzavta" club which is maintained jointly by Mapam and the Labor-dominated Haifa municipality, but the municipality imposed a veto over the invitation of Hussein. Mapam decided to hold the meeting at a private hall, rented for the purpose.

A new obstacle then arose: the police arrested Feisal Hussein in the aftermath of the Temple Mount events, on suspicion of "having incited youths to throw stones". The Haifa meeting was saved by the substitution of Ziad Abu-Ziad, Hussein's colleague in the Palestinian leadership; Abu-Ziad and Tzaban spoke to a packed hall.

Feisal Hussein was soon released, since the police failed to substantiate any of its allegations – much to the discontent of the government hardliners. Ministers Ariel Sharon and Yuval Ne'eman demanded of Defence Minister Arens to take "firm and far-reaching steps against the rampaging Arabs" (*Ha'aretz*, 11.11.'90).

Three days later, Arens issued administrative detention orders for six months against the journalists Ziad Abu-Ziad and Raduan Abu-Ayash and for a whole year (!) against the Gaza physician Ahmed Taufiq Al-Yazdji. Unnamed military circles leaked to the press that the detainees had "published leaflets inciting to violence". This assertion, however, will not have to stand up to any judicial test. Administrative detention orders require no charge sheets and no trial.

Within hours after the detentions, dozens of Peace Now activists held a protest vigil at Prime Minister Shamir's residence. Further vigils took place on the following days: by Ratz youth at the Defence Ministry; and by well-known Israeli journalists – on the steps of the Journalists' Association Headquarters in Tel-Aviv.

The administrative detention orders aroused sharp criticism in the press and from a significant part of the political spectrum, ranging from the Communists to the Labor Doves. Abroad, too, there were many protests: from the International Federation of Journalists; from the Amsterdam-

based Association for Jewish-Palestinian Dialogue; from the editors of the American Jewish *Tikkun* magazine – to mention a few by name.

**DON'T ARREST THEM!
TALK WITH THEM!**

The following resolution, adopted by the ICIPP executive, was published as an advertisement in Ha'aretz on November 15:

The administrative detention order against three prominent Palestinians from the Occupied Territories – Raduan Abu-Ayash, Ziad Abu-Ziad and Dr. Ahmed Taufiq Al-Yazdji – constitutes a shameful surrender to prolonged pressures by the nationalist right and its ministerial representatives.

It is total nonsense to assume that such detentions can break up the Palestinian national uprising. This act is being taken at a time when Jewish-Arab relations – both in the Occupied Territories and in Israel proper – are undergoing an unprecedented deterioration. The cycle of violence and counter-violence is constantly escalating, demanding ever more victims.

Many repressive measures were proposed and implemented: the selective issuing of identity cards, a total blockade of the Occupied Territories, the prohibition on entering Jerusalem for inhabitants of the Occupied Territories; but none of these measures can stop the outbreak of fear and hatred. Other repressive measures – born from the crazy dreams of the nationalist right and considered by the government – will be of no avail either. **There is no chance for a solution but direct talks between the government of Israel and the PLO – the recognised Palestinians' national representative.** Only such talks can calm down the situation, end the violence and open the way to a political solution, ensuring the sovereignty, peace and security of the two peoples living in this land.

The three Palestinians – now placed under arbitrary detention – are staunch supporters of such a move towards peace. **Don't arrest them – talk with them!**

**The Israeli Council
for Israeli-Palestinian Peace**

Raduan Abu-Ayash and Ziad Abu-Ziad were placed at the Jneid prison in Nablus. As deliberations of Abu-Ayash's appeal began, the whole of Nablus was declared a "closed military zone"; all Israelis but soldiers and settlers were barred from entering the city.

However, Knesset Members could not be barred, and several of them came to meet the detainees.

On December 9 – the Intifada's third anniversary – Ratz KM Yossi Sarid visited the two Nablus detainees.

In the television news of the same day, a joint statement of Sarid and the detained Palestinian leaders was read: *The Intifada is the national struggle of the Arab Palestinian people, for its liberty and political independence. It cannot be ended by force and oppression – only through negotiations between Israel's government and the Palestinian people's legitimate representative.*

Two days later, Raduan Abu-Ayash's term was reduced from six to five months!

Peace Now started to place a weekly advertisement in *Ha'aretz*, with lists of people who demand the release of the three Palestinian leaders – thereby also protesting administrative detention as such.

Letters of protest to:

Defence Minister Moshe Arens, Ha'kirya, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

Letters of solidarity to:

Dr. Ahmed Taufiq Al-Yazdji, Prisoner Nr. 54297, Ansar-3 (Ketziot); Israel; and to: Ziad Abu-Ziad and Raduan Abu-Ayash, Jneid Prison (Ha'kele Ha'merkazi Le'yehuda Ve'shomron), Nablus, West Bank, via Israel.

On December 3, a new public appearance of Feisal Hussein together with Mapam KM Chaim Oron was going to take place. Kahanists made a days-long campaign of threatening phone calls and obscene graffiti on the walls of the building where the meeting was scheduled. On the evening itself, they stood outside waving hanging nooses at those who entered. Police prevented the racists from entering the hall.

On the following day, the mass-circulation *Yediot Aharonot* published extensive excerpts from Hussein's speech:

"I would like to see Iraq withdraw from every square centimetre of Kuwaiti territory, just as I want Israel to withdraw from every square centimetre of the Occupied Territories (...)

"I don't care if a million immigrants – or even more – come to Israel, as long as it is not at the expense of the Palestinian people. (...) We too, have people living in exile, and I want all of them to return (...)

"None of us is happy with the killing and the stabbings. What you see these days are acts by isolated individuals; so far, we still have control over the people in general. But I fear that in two more years you may have to talk with somebody who only speaks the language of the jungle. I don't speak that language."

Dialogue on trial

On October 29, The Knesset House Committee decided – by a majority of 13 to 6 – to recommend to the Knesset plenum the removal of parliamentary immunity from KM Muhammad Miari, so that he could be prosecuted for meeting PLO officials in Greece and Cyprus, two and a half years previously (see *TOI-43, p.7*). This majority against Miari was achieved mainly thanks to the Labor Party's hostile "neutrality".

The House Committee's decision was sharply condemned in the editorials of the liberal *Ha'aretz* and of the Labor-affiliated *Davar* newspaper. Much-respected jurists, and organizations such as the Rabbinical Human Rights Watch also spoke out firmly. The editorial of the mass-circulation *Yediot-Aharonot* joined in, albeit more cautiously. Not less important – the whole political leadership of Israel's Palestinian citizens united behind Miari. In an unprecedented step, full-page advertisements were placed in the Hebrew press, calling upon the Jewish public to pressure the Knesset on behalf of Miari.

The signatories included dozens of Arab mayors, trade-unionists, public figures, political parties and social organizations. Many of them

were for years among Miari's bitter political rivals, but all felt that Miari was attacked because he was an Arab, and that the attack on him was an attack on the very right of Arabs in Israel to organise as a national minority – and to be represented as such.

Despite all this, it was still generally assumed that the plenum, like the House Committee, would vote to remove Miari's immunity. Miari's lawyer, Yossi Bard, was already preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court, to be presented immediately afterwards.

To everybody's surprise, at a late night hour on November 5 the anti-Miari motion was defeated by 49 to 45 votes. The Labor Party, fearing to alienate its Arab electorate, had mobilised its forces on behalf of Miari. Moreover, Re'uven Rivlin and Michael Kleiner from the Likud declared publicly their refusal to support the motion, and left. Rivlin, a lawyer, gave as his reason that Miari would have a good case in the Supreme Court, which might give the supporters of dialogue with the PLO the Supreme Court's seal of approval.

Rivlin paid a price for his dissent: Likud hardliner Tzachi Ha'negbi vowed publicly "to end that turncoat's career" and already succeeded in depriving Rivlin of his seat on the prestigious Knesset Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee.

Another victory for the dialogue camp was the Supreme Court's rejection, on the November 12, of an appeal by the same Tzachi Ha'negbi. The appeal was aimed at having former Labor Minister Ezer Weitzman prosecuted for his 1989 meeting with PLO member Nabil Ramlawi in Geneva, a meeting which, in January 1990, provoked a cabinet crisis (*see TOI-40, p.5*). The court ruled that there is no clear prima-facie evidence that Weitzman committed any crime, and that – even if there had been – this act would have been protected by Weitzman's parliamentary immunity.

In general the Israeli judicial system does not seem eager to enforce the prohibition against meetings with the PLO. The defence

and prosecution at the appeal of the Romania Four – who met with the PLO in Romania in November 1986 – finished presenting their respective cases in July 1989; but the Supreme Court still seems not at all in a hurry to give its verdict.

Three other trials are at present being conducted: of "The Hungary Eight"; of David Ish-Shalom who met PLO members at Athens; and of Abie Nathan – who met with Arafat in Tunis soon after completing a previous prison term for the same offence. All three cases are proceeding at a snail's pace, with the judges disputing procedural points while waiting for the Supreme Court's delayed decision in the preceding case.

Between November 21 and 24, political scientists and activists from all over the world met at the Free University of Amsterdam to discuss Israeli and Palestinian security needs, and a possible settlement of the conflict in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis. This was the first conference since the outbreak of Gulf crisis, in which Israelis and PLO representatives participated together.

The Israeli participants included Prof. Yehoshafat Harkabi, Prof. Yaron Ha'ezrachi, KM Ran Cohen of Ratz and Dr. Gadi Yatziv, head of the Mapam Council. On the Palestinian side there were Prof. Yazeed Sayig, Prof. Hanan Mikha'il Ashrawi – both from the Occupied Territories – and two official PLO representatives, Dr. Nabil Shaath and Leila Shaheed.

The participants did not reach agreement over how to analyse the Gulf crisis. A main sticking point was the demand by the Israeli participants that the Palestinians condemn Saddam Hussein for threatening to use poison gas against Israel, if attacked. The Palestinians, for their part, insisted on not dealing with this question separately but as part of the Middle East problems as a whole, and declared their principle opposition to the use of non-conventional weapons by any party.

There was, however, a general feeling that the disagreement about the Gulf crisis should not block the way for dialogue, and that the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict could – and should – be solved.

At this moment I am deliberately and knowingly breaking the Israeli law, said peace activist (and TOI editor) Adam Keller while shaking hands with PLO official Basim Al-Jamal, in front of a cheering audience of 300 people at a London conference called by the Campaign Against War in the Gulf.

The whole story was reported to the Israeli public by *Ha'aretz*, on November 5. On November 10, Keller repeated the act with Afif Safieh, PLO representative in Britain. The two spoke at a conference held in Coventry by CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament).

Usually, such law breakers receive a summons for investigation immediately upon arrival at Ben Gurion Airport. In this case, the police somehow did not show interest.

Inside the army

In three years of Intifada, 127 members of the Israeli armed forces spent altogether 4,155 days in prison, for refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories. Among them were fifteen officers, ranging from lieutenant to major.

■ On October 12, the first career officer was added to the ranks of the refusers. 24-year old lieutenant Nir Kenan refused to assume command of a company in the Gaza Strip. That was the end of his career (in the army), and the beginning of a prison term.

■ On October 19, more than thirty High School pupils came to the Defence Ministry, to present a letter declaring their intention of refusing, upon conscription, to serve in the Occupied Territories. As in previous similar cases, the guards at the Ministry gate refused to let them pass or to deliver the letter – which was later sent to the Minister by registered post, and published in the newspapers.

■ On October 25, Justice Minister Dan Meridor toured the Gaza Strip, and discussed with middle-

rank officers the problem of the military "open-fire" regulations. Several officers told Meridor: *It is not only a question of what is legal and what could get us prosecuted. The problem is that we don't want to kill Palestinians* (Ha'aretz, 26.10).

■ When Asher Charodi was conscripted in 1979, he had to make a special effort in order to be enlisted in a combat unit, since he had lost his father in the Six Day War.

On November 27, 1990, Charodi was ordered to perform reserve service in Bethlehem. He told his commanding officer: *I have volunteered to defend the country, not to be an oppressor*. He was sentenced to 28 days.

■ After a year of deliberations, the Supreme Court rejected the appeal of reservist Yo'av Hess (see TOI-39, p. 12). With the support of Yesh G'vul he had appealed against the army's "open fire regulations", which authorise soldiers to shoot masked Palestinians on sight, and permit practically free use of the supposedly "non-lethal" rubber and plastic bullets. As Adv. Avigdor Feldman pointed out, 144 Palestinians were killed by soldiers since the appeal was made – nearly half of them under sixteen.

Yesh Gvul published a brochure with testimonies about the way twelve of these 144 Palestinians died: "Nehergu al pi hap'kudot" (Killed according to regulations).

■ On December 1, thirty two reservists, fresh from a tour of duty in Gaza – among them twelve officers – wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Shamir. They called upon him to give up Israeli rule in the Gaza Strip.

On December 12, the officers held a vigil at the Prime Minister's residence. One of them, a declared Likud supporter, told Israeli television that they were expressing the opinion of thousands of officers and soldiers: *Judea and Samaria* (the West Bank, ed.) *we need for security reasons, but what do we need Gaza for? There are 750,000 angry and desperate Arabs there. The soldiers' life is hell, and it is all for nothing!*

Quick in capturing such sentiments, Labor dove Yossi Beilin proposed publicly, on December 10, the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state, in the

Gaza Strip, and the granting of autonomy to the West Bank Palestinians who would be enabled to join the Palestinian state after peace is achieved between Israel and Jordan, Syria and Iraq.

■ After his three years of military service, mostly spent in fighting the Intifada, 22-year old Yehuda Ma'or published a kind of diary under the title "Ha-Mapolet" (The Collapse). More than half of Ma'or's original version was banned by the military censorship. But the remaining 61 pages, published in a private edition, were enough for his former commanding officer to accuse Ma'or of *besmirching his comrades and presenting them as thugs* (Tel-Aviv magazine, 7.12.'90).

Ma'or responded: *Captain Sofer knows very well that all I described is true, he was there. He also knows that many soldiers in the company helped me and told me their experiences, and that they are bitter at what we were made to do*. (Tel-Aviv Magazine, 13.12.'90).

■ Among the Druze youth, opposition to conscription is increasing. They feel bitter at *serving in the army such as the Jews do, and being discriminated such as the Arabs are*. Only a few particularly dramatic instances find their way into the media.

On December 5, *Ha'olam Haze* reported the case of a Druze conscript who arrived at the recruiting base and declared his refusal to wear a uniform and be enrolled in the IDF; he was promptly arrested, attempted to commit suicide and was taken to hospital. The press got wind of the incident through an eye-witness – another conscript; neither the Druze youth's name nor anything about his subsequent fate are known.

Public attention for the question of Druze conscription also increases because of the repeated arrests of Adi Nafa'a, the son of Communist KM Muhammad Nafa'a, who publicly supports his struggle (TOI-42, p. 10).

The Druze Initiative Committee started a petition demanding the abolition of Druze conscription. More than 8,000 signatures were collected, which means that a considerable percentage of the entire Druze community has already

signed (*Zu Haderech*, 12.12.'90). A demonstration against Druze conscription is due to take place in Jerusalem on December 30.

The military authorities reacted with the announcement that Druze conscripts will no longer be excluded from serving in the navy or air force – too late, it seems.

Israeli heart

In recent months, Israel's media has become the target of a right-wing nationalist offensive. Anti-Arab mobs regularly direct their aggression also towards journalists – especially those with a camera – who try to do their work in "hot" places. Moreover, during Rabbi Kahane's funeral there was an attempt to storm the Israeli Television Building, which happened to be sited on the route of the funeral procession. A policeman who barred the aggressive mourners' way was severely beaten up. This elicited from Knesset Member Uzi Landau (Likud) the comment: *Not all journalists deserve police protection. Some serve the PLO*.

The government-owned electronic media, especially, suffer a great deal. Officially an independent entity, the Israeli Broadcasting Authority is controlled by governors who represent political parties. An active nationalist faction – headed by Shlomo Kor, the deputy chair of the board of governors – is constantly on the alert for "leftist infiltration into the media".

Under their pressure, radio and television commentators are forbidden to use the terms "Occupied Territories" or "West Bank", and have to say "Judea and Samaria" instead. Commentators who used the term "Temple Mount massacre" were reprimanded and told to say "Arab-instigated riots". Well-known jurist Moshe Negbi had his legal commentaries program cancelled – he had often discussed human rights issues, as well as International Law and its application to Israeli government policies. Veteran television researcher Michael Karpin was forbidden to produce an in-depth program on the Intifada, and had to resign.

Kor's latest target is Rafiq Halabi

a senior news editor, who is a retired army captain and one of the most highly-placed members of the Druze community in Israel. Kor and the other rightists waged against him a campaign of insinuations, accusing him of "disloyalty to Israel". The "proof" was provided by an article Halabi published in the Nazareth paper "A-Sinara". Commenting on the Temple Mount massacre, Halabi wrote:

They fell as nameless victims in their own country. They are murdered and the murderer is justifying his murder.

The Kor clique demanded that Halabi be suspended from his work in the television because "a man who accuses Jews of murder must not be allowed to edit the television evening news".

The board of governors thereupon set itself up as a tribunal, to try Halabi's case. Halabi obtained the services of the well-known Adv. Amnon Zichroni. There followed a series of agitated meetings which were duly reported in the daily press. Labor governor Roni Feinstein was quoted as shouting at Kor: *Your incitement against the journalists is an invitation to murder - if somebody really does it, the blood will be on your hands!* (Yediot Aharonot, 14.11.'90).

Two weeks later, at the conclusion of a late-night meeting, Halabi was given the chance to speak out on his own behalf:

(...) I was conscripted. I had to fight in three wars, to fight against the Syrian Druze and the Lebanese Druze. And between the wars I fought in the real struggle for the culture of our country. I said our country! My father's identity card had "Nationality: Arab"; mine has "Nationality: Druze"; what will be written in my son's? You members of the eternal minority, did you hear about Emile Zola, and the injustice done to Dreyfuss? (...) From my childhood I learned to walk a tightrope (...) You have put my loyalty in doubt and this is tearing my heart. You have made me a schizophrenic in my own country. But I tell you: nobody can tear my Israeli heart out of my Druze body!" (Yediot Aharonot and Chadashot, 28.11.'90.)

The leadership of the Druze

community declared its support for Halabi, and threatened with a general strike in the Druze villages, should he be fired. Also, the Television Workers' Union - which was, for many years, headed by Halabi himself - and The Association of Israeli Journalists took a firm stand. Moreover, the mayors of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv came out in public support of Halabi, and the Knesset Education Committee passed a resolution in his favor.

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The board of broadcasting governors postponed the decision in the Halabi case. Probably they will search for a less widely-supported target instead. At the time of writing, Yaron London, who presents a unique television blend of news, entertainment and satire on Friday evening, seems the most likely candidate.

Art and the state

■ Each year, ten Israeli writers are chosen to receive the Levy Eshkol Award, a year's salary enabling them to devote all their time to writing. Since the award is named for a former Prime Minister, the incumbent is expected to sign the award certificate. This year, however, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was displeased with two of the choices made by the Eshkol Fund, namely Yitzhak La'or and Ehud Ben-Ezer.

Yitzhak La'or is long known for his controversial poems and plays; Shamir seems to have been especially incensed with La'or's use of the word "blood". In a poem about the Lebanon war, La'or mentions a Prime Minister who drank blood, and in another poem he attributes a taste for Palestinian blood to certain settlers in the West Bank.

Ehud Ben-Ezer infuriated Shamir, not so much with his works of art,

as with his political articles. Ben-Ezer, who has been a Knesset candidate for the center-left Shinuy Party, recalled in his biting criticisms of the government the pre-'48 period in which the Shamir-led Lechi underground was "put beyond the pale" by the Ben Gurion-led Hagana militia.

Shamir expressed his displeasure by refusing to sign La'or and Ben Ezer's award certificates. Shamir did not, however, have the authority to prevent the two from getting the award money, which is granted by an independent board. Nevertheless, Shamir's action drew sharp protests from the Association of Hebrew Writers, which denounced it as "political interference in the freedom of artistic creation".

Moreover, all but one of the eight other award recipients sent their certificates back to Shamir, in protest. For several days, the affair raged in the media, with politicians of all parties expressing fairly predictable positions; moreover, sales of the two contested writer's books have picked up.

■ The name of Dr. Gideon Ofrat, until recently known only among art experts, was suddenly catapulted into the public consciousness. Ofrat found himself in the midst of an artistic-political scandal.

For over a year, Ofrat has worked to prepare an exhibition entitled "The Figure of the Leader, in Hundred Years of Israeli Art" - with "Israeli Art" defined as including the works of artists working in the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine. The exhibition idea originated with Rehav'am Ze'evi, the curator of the Tel-Aviv municipal museum - who also happens to be an active extreme-right politician, elected to the Knesset on a platform advocating "transfer" of all Palestinians.

Ze'evi was greatly displeased with much of the collection Ofrat had set up. On November 18, he informed Ofrat of the exhibition's cancellation, stating:

It is disgraceful to place a painting showing a gorilla ape standing besides Ben Gurion and the other Founding Fathers - or one depicting a naked man scratching his behind while watching Prime Minister Golda Meir on television - in the Indepen-

dence Hall, where the State of Israel was proclaimed! (Hadashot, 30.11).

Ofrat responded:

I had no political criteria in selecting paintings for this exhibition, only artistic ones. I also included paintings from the 1920s and the 1950s, where Zionist leaders are virtually made into demigods. But Ze'evi has to face the fact that since then, nobody paints that way any more. Many of the prominent artists in the 1970s felt disgusted with nationalist euphoria, and of course this is reflected in their works. Ze'evi can't just tear these pages out of the history of Israeli art.

The curators of several other museums already offered to host the exhibition. However, Ze'evi – who seems to have the legal right to do so – rejected all such offers out of hand. Gideon Ofrat does intend to go on with publishing the aborted exhibition's catalogue.

Deportations, demolitions and the Supreme Court

Among Israeli peace and human rights activists, the role of the Supreme Court has long been the subject of debate. The Supreme Court earned a good name for defending civil rights inside Israel's pre-'67 territory.

In most cases concerning the Occupied Territories, however, the judges all too often tend to accept at face value the military authorities' claim that certain action is necessary for reasons of state security.

The Supreme Court rejected all Palestinian appeals citing the Fourth Geneva Convention – though Israel is a signatory to it – on the grounds that *the Convention was never adopted as Knesset law*. This year, two attempts to get such a bill enacted – by the liberal KM Amnon Rubinstein and the Communist KM Tamar Gozanski – ended in failure.

Thus, all Palestinian appeals against a deportation order were rejected by the Supreme Court – often on the basis of secret information which the deportees and their

lawyers were not allowed to see.

Nevertheless, a Supreme Court appeal usually takes several months to arrive at this inevitable end – giving the deportees time to mobilise support, inside Israeli and abroad, which often proves embarrassing to the government. For that reason, deportations ceased entirely from August 1989 until December 1990.

Recently, hardliners put increasing pressures on Defence Minister Arens to resume the deportations. They got their chance after the murder of three Israelis in Tel-Aviv on December 14; Arens ordered the deportation of four Gaza Strip residents – suspected of being leading members of the Hamas movement which claimed responsibility for the murder.

Already during the search for the actual murderer(s), the fate of the four was decided without trial. They have the possibility to appeal – but in this case, as in all previous ones, the deportation order is certain to receive the Supreme Court's approval. In government circles talk was heard of "streamlining" the legal procedures, letting it last days instead of months.

ACRI (the Association for Civil Rights in Israel) did have some notable successes in appeals to the Supreme Court. In one case, an appeal resulted in the army being forced to court-martial colonel Yehuda Meir, who had ordered soldiers to break the arms and legs of Palestinian inhabitants.

Another ACRI appeal challenged the practice of forbidding the whole population of certain villages – which were considered "especially hostile" – to go abroad. This policy, maintained for several years, was abolished shortly before the date set for the Supreme Court deliberations.

Similarly, in several cases where Palestinian prisoners were forbidden to see a lawyer, the situation changed after ACRI lodged an appeal to the Supreme Court.

On September 20, an Israeli soldier was killed at El-Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip (see TOI-43 p.2). The government declared its intention to retaliate by massive house demolitions at

the camp. ACRI made an appeal to the Supreme Court, to halt the demolitions; however, the court chose to believe General Matan Wilnai, that *the demolitions were not a retribution, but a vital security need, necessary in order to widen the alleys and make them more safe for army patrols.*

Drama

This year's winning play at the Acre Festival of Alternative Theatre was Ilan Chatzor's "Masked Faces". It is the first attempt by an Israeli playwright to portray the Intifada – and Palestinian society – from the inside. All the play's characters are Arabs, and it centers on the dramatic conflict between two brothers – an Intifada activist and a collaborator.

At another hall, players re-enacted scenes from the recent court-martials of soldiers, convicted of beating up, torturing or killing Palestinians.

The well-known writer Dan Almagor originally intended using the court-martials only as raw material. However, while going over the courtroom minutes, he realised that *the prosecution, defence and witnesses unintentionally produced a unique dramatic text, which needs no change in order to be put on the stage.*

A few hours later, military bulldozers pulled down 34 houses, with the Supreme Court's full authorisation. The Supreme Court did order the state to provide the Palestinian families with alternative housing. They were offered a temporary refuge in the tuberculosis (!) hospital. Some weeks later the authorities offered the families housing at Rafah, some 50 kilometers to the south, near the Egyptian border. Not all families accepted this offer. When the famous peace activist Abie Nathan visited El-Bureij two months later he found many families still in the hospital – under the threat of being once more evicted (Jerusalem Post, 13.11.'90).

The El-Bureij affair left many ACRI members with a bitter feeling. ACRI activist Maya Rosenfeld published an open letter, accusing

the Association's leadership with participating in the Supreme Court's crooked game (published in *Al-Hamishmar*, 15.10.'90). Inside the association, two factions emerged: the field workers, jurists and volunteers, are daily visiting the Occupied Territories and collecting evidence of human rights violations – many of which are perfectly legal under Israeli law. They tend to regard defending human rights as a political act. On the other hand the lawyers who concentrate on Supreme Court appeals have an interest in keeping ACRI from having any political orientation, and are even willing to help racist groups who are denied the right to hold a demonstration (*Chadashot*, 30.11).

Another Human Rights organization, B'tselem, did decide to take the step of denouncing the Supreme Court's policy on house demolitions. Noting that between August and November, 29 houses were demolished and 48 sealed, B'tselem stated:

"The demolition and sealing of houses is a method of punishment unique to Israel. It is carried out through an administrative process, without trial, prior to determining the guilt of the individual whose house is being demolished. Those injured by house demolitions are family members of the suspected security offender, and not the offender himself (...)

"In conclusion, we must say with regret that in rejecting all the appeals (except one) that have been presented to date, the Supreme Court is granting legitimacy to the continuing abuse of human rights and to the use of punishment that is unrivaled in its severity, and that has been described by the former president of the Supreme Court, Judge Agranat, as "inhuman".

Contact:

ACRI, POB 8273, Jerusalem 91082
B'tselem, 18 Keren Hayesod St., Jerusalem 92149.

■ With the new anti-Arab wave, the volunteers of Kav La'oved (Workers Hotline) were swamped with work. Papers such as *Ha'ir* and *Jerusalem Post* published much of the information gathered by the Workers Hotline. Special press attention was given to the case of the Grand Beach Hotel in Tel Aviv

which laid off eight Arab workers (three of them Israeli citizens!) – after many years of impeccable labor.

ACRI, as well as Mapam Knesset Member Ya'ir Tzaban, have already been involved in the struggle.

Kav La'oved also hopes to pressure the Histadrut which, as official trade-union federation, gained millions of Shekels automatically deducted during many years from the salaries of Palestinian workers.

Meanwhile, more and more cases presented through Kav La'oved to the labor courts are won, with employers forced to grant arrears of wages and the legally-due severance pay. It is extremely important to convey to Israeli employers that *even now there are limits to what one can do to Arab workers.*

Contact:

Kav La'oved, Ahad Ha'am 62, Tel-Aviv

■ On October 14 Ya'akov Ben Efrat, the last of the imprisoned *Derech Hanitzotz* journalists, was released after serving his full two and a half years' imprisonment – including a long period of total isolation. He was welcomed by more than a hundred people. Many of these did not know him before, but were drawn into the struggle for his release, in protest against the courts defining the publication of a newspaper to be "terrorist activity".

■ Michel Warshawski, director of the Alternative Information Center found guilty of "helping a terrorist organization", was due to be in prison until February 1991. The Shabak (security services) was opposed to the reduction of his term by a third. However, the Shabak legal department made a mess of their affidavit, which was full of factual mistakes, and the Prison Authority decided to disregard it.

Warshawski was released "for good behavior" already on November 11. Until February, he will still have to report to the police several times a week.

■ Since May 1989, a battered manual typewriter was kept in the custody of the Ramat-Gan police. In order to confiscate it, two policemen – equipped with a duly authorised search warrant – had come, at a late evening hour, to the house of peace activist Ehud Spie-

gel. The reason for this special police action: the machine was supposed to have been instrumental in the commission of a crime, namely *the composition of two scurrilous letters which had been sent by post.*

The letters were addressed to settler leader Elyakim Ha'etzni, known for his relentless campaign to have Palestinian inciters and agitators deported en masse. In the letters Spiegel called him a Nazi and announced that *after the creation of the sovereign Palestinian state, side-by-side with Israel, you and your storm troops will be evicted from the Palestinian land you stole.* Both letters had been signed by Spiegel, and included his full address.

In the course of time, a charge sheet was prepared, charging Spiegel with contravention of Articles 12 and 87 of the Post Office Act, carrying a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment. Spiegel took a lawyer and prepared for a legal battle over the concept "scurrilous", when on November 1 of this year the prosecution abruptly withdrew all charges... and had the typewriter returned.

Debates in Russian

Since the beginning of the Soviet Jewish immigration wave, Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories have made considerable efforts to entice the newcomers to their settlements. Russian-speaking settlers wait at Ben-Gurion airport for the arriving immigrants; several settler delegations went to the Soviet Union itself, equipped with video cassettes showing beautifully landscaped settlements.

During the second week of November, "dissident" government officials leaked to the press and to the Peace Now movement the news that Housing Minister Ariel Sharon approved of the building of 7,000 new houses in the Occupied Territories and of the immediate placing of 1,000 caravans. Reconnaissance by a small group of Peace Now activists confirmed that new caravans had, indeed, been placed in several Jewish

About linkage

"Peace Now wants a rapid advance towards peace with the Palestinians – if possible even before the solution of the Gulf crisis. But we oppose a linkage between the two, which may benefit Saddam Hussein." In this way former Ratz Knesset Member and prominent Peace Now activist Mordechai Bar-On, characterised the position of Peace Now – which, in fact, prevailed in the moderate peace camp in general since the outbreak of the Gulf crisis.

An alternative position was put forward by eight professors at Tel-Aviv University, in a manifesto published in *Yediot Aharonot* and *Hadashot*, on November 5.

From its low profile on the issue of war, Israel should pass to a high profile on the issue of peace.

Shamir might hold in his hands the key to the peace solution in the region. Instead of waiting for a settlement enforced upon us from without – in the wake of a war whose outcome cannot be predicted – Israel should seize the initiative and propose a peace agreement from its present position of strength, with the world united against Iraq.

Only such an Israeli initiative could prevent an American-Iraqi agreement from leaving the Iraqi threat against Israel intact.

Now is the time that Israel should recognise the Palestinian right to self determination, and should proclaim its willingness to enter negotiations concerning the Occupied Territories, with the participation of the PLO.

settlements on the West Bank. On the morning of November 24, hundreds of Peace Now demonstrators set out for two of these, Beit Aryeh and Alon.

Traveling through Intifada-land required some precautions. In order not to be recognised and stopped at army checkpoints, the demonstrators traveled in convoys of unmarked private cars. However, in case of an encounter with stone-throwing Palestinian youths, passengers in each car carried a folded placard, with the words "Peace Now" in Hebrew and Arabic.

In this event, the Peace Now

convoys arrived without incident at their destinations. For several hours, demonstrators picketed the iron-barred entrances to the settlements, engaging in sharp debate with the settlers. The Israeli television, which gave extensive coverage to this protest, emphasized the participation of homeless Israelis in the demonstration. Yamin Suissa, heading the homeless group, told the television: *We have been sitting in tents for nearly half a year now. Sharon promised to give us caravans, but nothing came of this promise. Now, we see the caravans being put here in the settlement!*

During the confrontation between demonstrators and settlers, several heated debates were carried on in Russian: new immigrants were to be found both among the settlers and in the ranks of Peace Now.

The Peace Now movement has made the establishment of contacts with Soviet immigrants one of its main priorities. Advertisements were placed in the (now thriving) Russian-language papers published in Israel, and on the billboards of the "immigration absorption centers". Meetings in Russian were held, mostly in private homes; like the settlers, Peace Now also opened an office in Moscow – to disseminate its views among the prospective immigrants.

On November 18, about a hundred Soviet immigrants participated in a special Peace Now conference in Jerusalem. Some of the participants, already arrived in Israel in the 1970s; others were of very recent date, like one family that arrived less than a week before!

The participants divided into workshops, and discussed the prospects of drawing more immigrants into the peace movement. It was mentioned that many Soviet immigrants feel aversion to everything "leftist" which reminds them of communism, and that they are influenced by the mood of militant nationalism which is spreading among all ethnic groups in the Soviet Union.

Some participants also claimed that the PLO office in Moscow maintains contacts with the anti-semitic "Pamyat" movement, and that this helps the Israeli right-

wing to find support among Soviet Jews.

On the other hand, the predominantly non-religious immigrants – especially those with non-Jewish spouses – encounter quite a lot of difficulties from the side of the Israeli religious establishment. Many workshop participants explained that such difficulties made them aware of the significance of the civil and human rights issue in Israel.

At the conclusion of the conference, it was decided to try to organise a meeting between Soviet immigrants and Russian-speaking Palestinians, who studied in the Soviet Union.

Contact:

Peace Now, POB 24288, Jerusalem.

Dreams and their price

The combination of the Gulf crisis and the raging cycle of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed, resulted in a near-total collapse of tourism to Israel. Even among veteran American Jewish Zionist activists, a certain reluctance to visit Israel has become apparent.

Paradoxically, however, Soviet Jewish immigration is actually increasing, reaching a record of 30,000 in November. For many Soviet Jews, the fast deteriorating situation in their homeland seems to hold greater dangers than Israel has to offer.

Nor is it only a question of spreading anti-semitism: many of the Jews arriving in Israel are in fact "economic refugees", fleeing for the only Western country willing to receive them. Indeed, many non-Jewish Soviet citizens seek to avail themselves of the same opportunity, by marrying Jews or obtaining forged identity cards proclaiming them to be Jews.

Rabbi Yitzchak Peretz, Israel's Minister of Immigrant Absorption, created a controversy by claiming that "30 to 35 percent of the immigrants are not Jews" and demanding strict controls in order to weed out these *goyim*.

The Israeli rightists regard the new immigrants as an instrument

for tipping the "demographic balance" between Jews and Palestinians, filling up the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories, and thus fulfilling "the Dream of Greater Israel, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River" (as Prime Minister Shamir put it in one of his provocative statements).

However, even though Shamir and his ministers glorify the new Aliya (immigration wave) as "a miracle of reborn Zionism", they have failed to make sufficient provisions for the material needs of the increasingly numerous immigrants.

Only in the first year after their arrival do immigrants receive a government subsidy for rents. Thus, many of those who arrived in late 1989, and who did not yet find jobs, are being turned out of their apartments - only to join the numerous homeless native Israelis.

In photographs published in the Israeli press, dozens of Soviet immigrants were shown picking half-rotten vegetables from the marketplace garbage dumps; cases of suicide among unemployed immigrants are becoming frequent; thousands of immigrant women turn to prostitution (*Davar*, 25.10).

There is a growing agitation among the immigrants, and the idea circulates of forming a new political party to defend their interests. Since all immigrants automatically get Israeli citizenship, such a "Russian" party in the next elections could overturn the whole balance of Israeli party politics.

It is obvious that, in order to provide the immigrants with adequate housing and jobs, an enormous capital investment is needed, estimated at between 20 and 30 billion Dollars. The government of Israel has no chance of raising sums of such magnitude without outside help. Such help, however, is likely to have political strings attached.

The Shamir government is already involved in a prolonged tug-of-war with the U.S. administration over a (patently inadequate) 400 million Dollars loan for immigrant housing. Secretary of State Baker made it clear that the funds should be used only inside Israel's pre-'67 territory - in contrast with the Israeli

government's proclaimed intention to settle tens of thousands of immigrants in East Jerusalem (the annexation of which to Israel the Americans refuse to recognise).

At the end of November, the directors of all Israeli banks took an unprecedented step: they jointly informed the Knesset and government that *Israel, in its present international circumstances, stands no chance of obtaining the funds necessary for immigrant absorption* (Yediot Aharonot, 28.11.'90). The governor of the Israel Bank, and leading economists of the Finance Ministry, are known to share this opinion.

On November 29, the following telegram was sent by Matti Peled and Amnon Zichroni, on behalf of the ICIPP, to Mr. Absa Claude Dialo, the chairman of the U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People:

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace expresses its wholehearted support for the rights of the Palestinian people as reaffirmed by the General Assembly in Resolution 32/40 B.

At the close of the third year of the Intifada we wish to express a sincere hope that a definite solution of the conflict will be agreed upon, based on the principles of Resolution 181 (II) calling for the establishment of a peaceful Palestinian State alongside Israel.

The number of immigrants expected to arrive by the end of 1990 is 200,000. As many as a million can be expected in the coming years. Social tensions and turmoil are likely to increase, involving both immigrants and native Israelis who will be thrown into a sharpening competition for jobs and housing. In these circumstances, Shamir's megalomaniac dream may well turn into a nightmare...

■ On October 8, a few hours after the Temple Mount massacre, a hundred peace activists picketed Prime Minister Shamir's residence

in Jerusalem. Additional protest actions took place in Tel-Aviv and Haifa. The Women Peace Coalition did not get permission to hold a vigil at Jerusalem's Old City Wall. 27 protesters did go there without permission on October 20, were detained and were held for some hours by the police.

Peace Now concentrated on the demand for an independent judicial commission of enquiry. Its members picketed the meetings of the "investigative committee" appointed by the Prime Minister, which to nobody's surprise published a report justifying the Temple Mount killings. However, Peace Now refrained from organising a large-scale protest rally, of the kind it held after the Rishon Le'tzion massacre. Thus, in Israel mass protest demonstrations were confined to the Arab towns and villages - where they were numerous.

Many Israeli peace activists - individually and in organised delegations - visited the wounded Palestinians in East Jerusalem hospitals, in order to express solidarity, donate blood and - not the least important - gather eyewitness accounts. The extensive reports published by B'tselem and by AIPPHR (Association of Israeli and Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights) were widely quoted in the Israeli and international press. They revealed important details, such as the police shooting on Palestinian medical crews and on clearly marked ambulances.

Moreover, from these reports it became crystal clear that police shooting started at a time when Jewish worshippers were already out of reach of any stones thrown from the Temple Mount. Thus, the government's main justification for the shooting was knocked down.

Contact: AIPPHR, POB 10235, Tel-Aviv 61104

■ The following account was given to TOI by religious peace activist Yochanan Lorwin:

On the evening of October 12, following the celebration of Simchat Torah, 20 religious Jews held a vigil in the Jewish Quarter of Old Jerusalem, near the Wailing Wall, and near the Temple Mount scene of 21 deaths and hundreds of



the second dance with Tora scrolls, which takes place in Israel after the end of the official feast. The demonstrators who stood on the steps leading to the Wailing Wall were holding signs: *Yes to Sensitivity to Human Life! Yes to Freedom of Expression!* and *The work of my hands is drowning in the sea, yet you want to sing before me!*

The latter is a reference to the Talmudic narrative (Aggadah Sanhedrin 39B) wherein G-d rebukes the angels who sang when the Egyptian pursuers were drowning in the Red Sea. The point, as one of the protesters explained, is that Jews are bidden not to rejoice at the downfall even of the clearly guilty.

The protesters met with predictable hostility from many people on their way to the Hakafot, and some lively arguments ensued. One worshipper on his way to the Wailing Wall defended the protesters' "freedom of thought", while others attacked them verbally (*take off your Kipah, you're a disgrace to the Jewish people*, is just one example).

Veronica Cohen, one of the organizers of the vigil, complained that the extremists were stealing her religion: *It's my religion too. I had to do something, to show that they are not dancing there in my name.*

Contact: POB 4433, Jerusalem 91043.

■ **Youth Against Occupation** was founded a year ago, during the Acre Festival. Yaron Davis, one of the founders, writes: Me and my mates from the Chafarperet group (see TOI-41, p.12) went inside the dormitory, from sleeping bag to sleeping bag, and invited people to the first protest stand. This first one was to become illegal (by the police's definition) and a policeman tore our signs, arresting two people and expelling them from Acre.

Since then, however, we stand regularly in Tel-Aviv at the same place (near the Dizengoff Shopping Centre) at the same time. Every week we shout our protest, as youth that will be sent to occupy, to destroy, to kill, to hit, to help the system we were born into. This is

our way of saying: You cooked this dish for us in 1967 and we have to eat it now after twenty three and half years. Now you'll hear what we have to say about it, and you better hear. We are saying that we have the right and the duty to say: **We will stop the occupation because it is our future you are dealing with!**

Later, on the telephone, Yaron told how they faced violence, all the year round, at the hands of street bums or organized right-wing groups. However, they don't feel like asking for police protection. The police is not their best friend! They try to start debates, not fights. But whenever people are full of news about recent Palestinian violence, or about a killed soldier, "then there are some problems".

White paint

On November 10, after a Mapam rally at the Coexistence Monument in Wadi Ara, Jewish and Arab participants traveled together in a convoy of hundreds of cars, armed with brushes and white paint. They frequently stopped to erase anti-Arab graffiti from bus stops and bridges along the road. A complaint was made to the Minister of Transportation and to the "Egged" Bus Company, who were requested to have racist graffiti erased as soon as it appears.

■ On December 7, the Israeli newspapers celebrated the arrival at Ben Gurion airport of 87-year old Yihye Tzabari, the first Jew to arrive from Yemen in nearly four decades. Color photographs were published of Tzabari's emotional reunion with his sons, who came to Israel in the 1950s; politicians of all hues were quick to congratulate the Tzabari family. Certainly none of them expected what became clear a few days later.

It seems that Tzabari was able to leave Yemen after the PLO – which is on good terms with the Yemenite government – intervened on his behalf. The contact between the Tzabari family and the PLO was established via the "peace sailor" Abie Nathan, as well as

through Moshe Nahum, a Canadian millionaire of Yemenite-Jewish origin. And even Knesset Member Aryeh Gamliel – of the Oriental Jewish Shas Party, a government coalition partner (!) – was involved in the contacts. KM Gamliel canceled, only at the last minute, a face-to-face meeting with senior PLO member Labib Terzi, who handled the contacts with the Yemenite government.

The Tzabari case is not unique; many other Israeli families have close relatives in Yemen, with whom nearly all contact was lost. The fact that the PLO was instrumental in effecting reunification might be confusing for those inside Israel's Yemenite community who have a nationalist attitude towards Palestinians.

■ On November 15, several dozen Arab and Jewish students gathered at the Haifa University campus, to hold a rally marking the second anniversary of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. University officials told the organisers that the purpose of the gathering was illegal under Israeli law, and gave them five minutes to tell the students to disperse.

According to the charge sheet later presented to the university's Disciplinary Commission, in the course of these five minutes *the students held aloft pro-Palestinian placards and chanted slogans against racism, and thus did hold the demonstration of whose illegality they had been duly informed.*

Two weeks later, the disciplinary proceedings took place. In contravention to university by-laws, lecturers were prevented from testifying in the students' favor. The most severe punishment was meted out to the only Jewish accused, Iris Bar, who was suspended from studies for a year; five Arab students were suspended for one semester. University security guards were instructed to bar the suspended students from entering the University campus.

Letters of protest to:
Gabi Ben Dor, Rector, Haifa University,
Mount Carmel, Haifa – with copies to
POB 956, Tel-Aviv 61008.