

The Other Israel

Newsletter of the Israeli Council
for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
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HOPE REBORN

Tel-Aviv, 10.9.93

"As these lines are being written, history is made. A years-long process has borne fruit, vindicating decades of effort by dedicated Israelis and Palestinians, some of whom gave their lives to make Israeli-Palestinian peace possible.

The road to peace remains long and hard. Sadly, some human beings who now live and breath will still become victims, before the conflict is finally ended. Nevertheless, the end is in sight; on the horizon can be dimly perceived a new era, a time in which views and visions like those expressed on these pages will have become a commonplace, the boring clichés of the new Israel."

The above words appeared here, on the front page of *The Other Israel*, nearly five years ago – on December 15, 1988, the day when Yasser Arafat stood at the U.N. General Assembly and officially recognized the state of Israel. Reading them again, I am struck by how premature they were. PLO recognition of Israel was not then reciprocated, as we hoped and expected; the happy end which we dimly perceived on the horizon soon disappeared from sight. There were so many disappointments and reverses, so many victims in the Occupied Territories, in Israel, in Lebanon...

Yet today, history has at last taken the turn it missed in 1988, and on many other years before and after. At this very moment, the Foreign Minister of Norway has landed at Ben Gurion Airport, with the document of mutual recognition bearing Yasser Arafat's signature and soon to bear Yitzhak Rabin's as well. And within a few days, the two leaders will

stand together on the White House lawn, to sign officially the Interim Agreement – the first agreement ever signed in a century-long conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

It is not yet the end. The Palestinians will not yet have the independent state which they – like any other people – deserve, and which alone can ensure lasting peace. But they will have an elected legislative council, a strong militia, an effective control over most of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip – a beginning. Many weighty problems remain: the nationalist-messianic Israeli settlers, whose life's dream is collapsing before their eyes, and whose settlements the agreement leaves as armed enclaves in the midst of Palestinian territory; the masses of impoverished Palestinian refugees, distrustful and embittered by decades of oppression – to whom the benefits of the new situation must be demonstrated in a concrete way; Jerusalem, the most emotionally loaded problem of all, whose Arab part will remain under Israeli rule for the next five years – a bitter pill for any Palestinian to swallow.

No agreement was yet reached with Syria – a powerful country which does not take kindly to being left out; and the unfinished war in South Lebanon still drags on, a festering sore. There are many pitfalls and many crises ahead; it will take much effort and much good will on both sides to implement this agreement, and even more – to follow it up by a definite peace agreement. Still, with all due caution, this is a day of rejoicing.

The editor

Mass peace rally

It was one of the biggest ever Peace Now demonstrations in Kikar Malchey Yisrael – Kings of Israel Square. Throughout the years everybody became more careful about numbers, but there were at least a hundred thousand.

The Peace Now movement started in the days of that other landslide: the coming of Egyptian Prime Minister Sadat to Israel, in order to start peace talks with Likud

Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The Camp David Accord which resulted from it, was far from being a comprehensive Middle East peace, but it was an indispensable step in that direction. It made the first breach in Israeli public opinion, which until then was made to believe only in security coming from military superiority.

In the 16 past years Peace Now had its ups and downs. It was not always as militant and stubborn in

its opposition to government policy as might have been expected from a peace organization. The question *where is Peace Now, these days?* was quite often heard – especially in the past year.

Peace Now is, in fact, not a movement but a barometer. It is able to bring about a mass rally whenever there is a widespread strong feeling among its constituency. This feeling can be of moral indignation, like after Sabra and

Shatila – or of hope for peace, as it was during the Camp David negotiations, the Madrid Conference, and the days after the news about the latest Israeli-Palestinian peace acrobacy.

The rally on the evening of September 4 was co-sponsored by the main parties of the of the government coalition (**Labour and Meretz**), **Gush Shalom**, the Kibbutz movements and the religious peace movement **Me'mad**. The dominant feeling at the square was sheer happiness. Of course, among long-time activists of the Israeli peace movement's hard core there was much debate about pitfalls, and not all allowed themselves to go with the euphoria, but nobody was left emotionally unmoved. Everybody agreed that something had happened, that something was moving. In the peace camp there were but a few true pessimists who expect that this is a change for the worse. Most widespread is the belief that it opens up possibilities, and that a better step forwards was not to be expected from any Israeli government.

The happiness which was shared in clapping, singing and dancing was not a naive happiness. It was a happiness that also in this country things are not doomed to be fixed forever. That there might after all come about a Middle East peace, with flaws and imperfections, but which will take Israel out of Intensive Care and make it a part of the – true, also not so perfect – normal world (**BZ**).

Yediot Aharonot – *the daily with the widest distribution* – published Ya'el Gvitz's account of the **Peace Now** rally:

For too many years, the Israeli left got used to an atmosphere of anger at its demonstrations on the Kings of Israel Square. Yesterday night there was not only a mass participation, but also true happiness to the point of tears.

This demonstration was perhaps the biggest reunion ever seen in Israel. Those who stood there exactly fifteen years ago, at the founding rally of Peace Now, now came back with their children. They came out of the seclusion into which they had retreated during the past decade out of tiredness, disappointment, and also from fear – after what happened to Emil Greenzweig (*who got killed by a grenade thrown at a Peace Now protest march in 1983. Ed.*).

Until the last moment the organizers did not know whether Yitzchak Rabin and Shimon Peres would arrive to speak in the rally. Their absence did not matter. The size of the crowd was reminiscent of fifteen years ago, when Menachem Begin was

involved in the Camp David negotiations. Years later, Begin told Amos Oz that it was because of these crowds that he continued the process in spite of the many moments of crisis.

It wasn't a crowd of professional demonstrators. There were countless youths and children who had never demonstrated before. There was an atmosphere of happiness, young people's kind of happiness – of those not yet burdened with disappointments and frustrations. A long time after the speeches had ended they were still dancing in circles, holding hands.

An enormous human belt filled the square and the nearby streets, a belt impervious to right-wing provocateurs. Over the past years, some of the participants had gone a long way, being again and again cursed and spat on in small protests. Yesterday, for the first time in years, they stood secure, watching the young dance.

■ On Sunday, August 29, the first public manifestation of support for the newly-revealed Israel-PLO agreement was a joint march in Jerusalem by local Israelis and Palestinians from Nablus, with most of the 200 participants wearing T-shirts in the colours of the Israeli and Palestinian flags.

Actually, this quite unique march was planned long in advance, as a return visit, following a very successful dialogue meeting held in Nablus on June 25.

Contact: Approchement phone: 972-2-732828

■ Monday, August 30 was the day that the Israeli cabinet convened to approve the "Gaza & Jericho first" deal with the PLO. Monday, August 30 was also a day of settlers rampaging in front of the government building – to be seen on television in living rooms all over the world.

As many **Peace Now** activists as could be mobilised by telephone on a Monday afternoon were standing face to face with them. The right-wingers – some two thousand of whom had been bussed in to the place – could be easily recognized as being mainly of the religious-nationalist settler movement Gush Emunim, although the banners of all right-wing parties were flown. The yellow flag of the ultra-racist Kach movement was there too, and its youth group made a lot of noise.

Standing there with hastily drawn slogans *We will not let the chance for peace be blocked*, and the already prepared banners *There is a mandate for peace!* the peace activists started feeling that their counteraction remained unnoticed. But, though a few hundred

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Back issues in microfiche: Human Rights Internet, University of Ottawa, 57 Pasteur, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5, Canada

A big step

The following statement was published in Hadashot on September 3.

The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace welcomes the decision of the Israeli government on August 31, 1993, to approve the Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

Since its formation in 1975, the ICIPP has called for recognition of the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people, for recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination in the territories conquered during the Six-Day-War, and for coexistence based on a peace agreement between the state of Palestine and the state of Israel.

Already in 1976 did the PLO make known its willingness to recognise Israel on a mutual base. The unfortunate refusal of successive Israeli governments to listen to these positions led directly to the killings and destructions which occurred subsequently, and to the loss of many opportunities to live in peace with all our neighbors.

After the achievement of peace with Egypt – which we wholeheartedly supported – it became clear that peaceful coexistence with all peoples of the region had passed from the realm of dreams into being a realistic possibility. However, the official Israeli insistence upon denying the basic rights of the Palestinian people continued to constitute a major obstacle on the way to peace.

Now, at last, the government understood that peace with the Palestinians is not only possible but also vital for Israel's continued existence. Steps were taken – initial steps, but very meaningful ones and opening new horizons. The ICIPP wholeheartedly joins in congratulating the government upon its wise decision. We hope that these initial steps will be followed up and point out the future development towards full Israeli-Palestinian peace, coexistence between Israel and Palestine, and simultaneously – peace with all nations of the region, based on mutual recognition of national rights and creative regional cooperation.

The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

newborn government supporters are nothing very sensational and were totally overlooked by the busy running reporters, they did annoy the settlers who had hoped to be the only ones to represent “the street”. Some of them came over to scold us for “not being Jews” (*why aren't you waving the Palestinian flag?*), others started harassing, and tried to provoke us into violence. There were also stones thrown from a distance. Life-long peace activist Reuven Kaminer was hit and that gave the Peace Now action some publicity after all. It was nice to hear him say on the Israeli radio: *Yes, a stone hit my head but, fortunately, I have a thick skull.*

■ Following news of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, the Women in Black held an emergency conference to consider whether or not to continue their weekly vigils throughout the country. It was decided to

continue, since the occupation is still in force. However, on Friday, September 3 each woman wore a white sash with the words *Yes to peace!*

The Jerusalem vigil on that day was bigger than usual, with more than a hundred participants. One of them told the Israeli television, which covered the event: *The more the peace process progresses, the whiter we will be dressed.*

■ On August 31, a specially chartered “peace train” set out from Haifa, with some 300 young Jewish and Arab Meretz members on board. At each station, additional youths climbed onto the wagons, covered with giant banners proclaiming: *The time has come for peace!* At the final station, Jerusalem, the youths debarked and went to the Prime Minister's Office. There, they held a rally and presented a petition, signed by 10,000 Israelis, supporting immediate withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. These were collected in the month of August, without knowledge of the soon-to-be disclosed Gaza-Jericho deal.

■ The Labor Party headquarters in Tel-Aviv is quickly gaining popularity as a place for demonstrations. On September 2, a cheering crowd of young people gathered there to express their support for the Israel-PLO agreement. Rabin, on his way to the Labor Party Bureau session, shook hands with several of the youngsters.

■ On September 4 Shlomo Lahat, the outgoing Likud mayor of Tel-Aviv, declared his full support for the accords with the PLO. He took the initiative of forming, together with a group of industrialists and business managers, a committee in support of the peace agreement. The participants would finance a country-wide campaign of roadside advertisements in favor of peace – countering a campaign of signs “The Land of Israel is in danger!”, which was started a week earlier by the nationalist-messianic Chabad movement and financed by American Jewish millionaires.

■ On September 5, inhabitants of “Adam” – an Israeli settlement on the West Bank northeast of Jerusalem – stated their willingness to leave the settlement in return for fair compensations. “We lived in the Jerusalem slums and the Likud government offered us cheap housing here,” they wrote to Housing Minister Ben-Eliezer. “We have no wish to obstruct the peace process. We would be happy to move to affordable housing in Jerusalem.”

The Tents, a Jerusalem slum-dwellers' organization which was formed in the 1980s, called upon the government to give consideration to such requests.

■ On September 11, two thousand people participated in a rally at Nazareth, supporting the peace accord. Tourism Minister Uzi Bar'am, speaking to the mostly Arab audience, called upon Israel's Arab citizens to use their family and social contacts to strengthen support for the peace on the Palestinian side.

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■ At an early morning hour on August 29, large police forces evicted about sixty Bedouins from the Har Hanegev plateau, after the Supreme Court ruled that they had no legal title to the lands on which their families have been living for generations. Several of them erected a protest tent in front of the Prime Minister's office, but got little media attention.

Ironically, some of the Israeli settlers, who demonstrated on the same spot against the Rabin-Arafat Accord, expressed sympathy with the Bedouins. At the time this goes into print, the Bedouins still go on with their protest.

Contact: Association for Bedouin Rights, POB 5212, Be'er Sheva 84224

■ On the morning of September 6, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem was totally cleared of "unauthorized persons", as former nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu was brought in; the authorities took no chances lest Vanunu – held in total isolation since 1986 – reveal to the world more secrets (?) about the Dimona Nuclear Pile.

Vanunu made two appeals to the Supreme Court; censorship forbade publication of any information about these appeals, except that the court rejected both. Israeli Radio reported that Vanunu represented himself, unassisted by a lawyer. Vanunu had appealed before against the harsh conditions of his solitary confinement.

The Seven-Day-Nightmare

27.7.1993

(...) As you may have guessed already, we are running around like crazy. While I am writing to you, the BBC is broadcasting pictures of bleeding and frenetically crying Lebanese children. Meanwhile, the Israeli public shows, for the time being, the obligatory support for The Government, and Our Boys. It is as if most people react to hearing of atrocities done in their name by a mental blackout, as if they got a morphine injection. It takes some time and effort to wake them up, to turn them again into thinking beings to whose common sense one can appeal.

The first on the street, protesting, were the **Hadash** Communists – a few hours after the bombs started falling in Lebanon. But it did not get much publicity. We did succeed yesterday in getting the Tel-Aviv **Gush Shalom** protest into the Israeli television news. We were some fifty people, most of whom you have seen before. It seems **Gush Shalom** is in a way dear to the radio and the television. And – against all odds – the Jerusalem Post also several times printed large photographs of our not really massive demonstrations. Other dailies report our activities in a more modest way, and sometimes ignore them even though a reporter was on the spot.

There were protests yesterday also in Haifa and Jerusalem.

After the demonstration yesterday we held an organizational meeting. For the time being the action "Jerusalem, Capital of Two States" had to be put off.

A whole lot of propopsals came up, of which the following two were the most concrete:

□ Cooperation with others. There happens to take place this week the meeting of the NGOs, called originally to discuss the upcoming Vienna meeting. That is a place to call for common struggle against the never-concluded and now restarted Lebanon War. Also, we will try to get all the participants out of the meeting room and to hold signs in another vigil.

□ An advertisement – together with **Women in Black** and **Yesh Gvul** (actually **Yesh Gvul** initiated it) to call for massive participation in the **Communist Party's** anti-war rally scheduled for the weekend.

Just now Adam comes home with the last news: probably we are going to have on Saturday night a torchlight march through Tel-Aviv. And at this very moment another **Gush Shalom** press release is rolling through the fax with a call on the Meretz ministers to leave the coalition. (By the way, they do progress: after the noise about their shameless support for the deportation policy, now they at least have the decency to say out loud that they are not very happy with this overreaction of the government of which they happen to be part).

In short: if... we would have a lot more of money we would know what to do with it. More publicity for our actions, resulting in stronger actions. After the item on the news of yesterday evening there were already telephone calls from people who want to be informed about further actions. And publicity not only gets to potential activists but also to people who participate in the ongoing public debate about politics (in the workplace, in the café, while waiting for the bus, or lining in the post office, at the market, in shops etc.).

regards, Beate

Reflections 2.9.93

Here, on the desk in front of me, are reminders of that seven-day nightmare: Beate's letter to our political friends in Holland, **Gush Shalom** press releases which I helped draft, leaflets, petitions, advertisements, a mass of paper clippings... Out of this raw material I intended to make an orderly and coherent account, enumerating the different groups, movements and actions. Yet, I find it extremely difficult to relive the atmosphere of that week. A bare month ago, it seems worlds away, bearing no resemblance to the reality of this moment.

Then, the media was fully mobilised in support of the war effort, with air pilots and artillerymen congratulated on their "heroism". The TV report of the **Gush Shalom** demonstration was a single oasis in a jingoist desert. Now, the very same TV commentators and mass-circulation newspapers vie with each other in praising the Israeli-PLO agreement, sending special correspondents to Tunis and obtaining "exclusive" interviews with Yasser Arafat.

Then, we all felt angry and furious at the government, for which the appellation "a peace coalition" seemed sheer mockery. Even after the cease-fire was proclaimed, we – activists of **Hadash**, of **Gush Shalom**, of **Yesh Gvul** and the **Women in Black** – felt determined to go ahead with the Tel-Aviv rally. We had to express, as strongly, as forcefully as we possibly could, our anger and disgust at the brutal

bombardment of civilians. And there was the moment in the middle of the rally, when we heard that Foreign Minister Peres was arriving at the nearby cinématèque: the furious outbursts, as young demonstrators surged against the ministerial bodyguards, shouting: *War Criminal! War Criminal!*

Yet now, a month later, we – the thousand activists who participated in that anti-war demonstration – are going to participate in a rally in which that same Shimon Peres would be hailed as a Hero of Peace. And not just participate – we are working very hard, giving our best, to ensure that it would be a truly giant rally, one of the biggest in Israeli history.

A heavy price

The seven-day bombardment of Lebanon did not solve any problem – as was tragically demonstrated on August 20, when nine Israeli soldiers were killed in an ambush. The following statement by Major General (ret.) Matti Peled speaking for Gush Shalom was extensively quoted in the Israeli press:

“Today we paid a heavy price for the so-called ‘Operation Accountability’. It turns out that the horrifying act of killing 114 Lebanese civilians and driving hundreds of thousands from their homes has brought Israel no more than two weeks of quiet.

What happened in Lebanon proves once again the bankruptcy of the Security Zone concept, beloved of Israeli decision-makers over the past decade. This so-called Security Zone, actually a strip of occupied Lebanese territory, provides no security to the inhabitants of Northern Israel. To no avail are the lives of young soldiers endangered by sending them there and making them into moving targets.

It seems that Yitzchak Rabin has learned nothing from Ariel Sharon’s Lebanese fiasco. Under Rabin, Israel is once more sinking into the Lebanese quagmire.

The time has come to try a new approach: a peace agreement, under which Israel will withdraw from the whole of South Lebanon, in return for security arrangements with the governments of Lebanon and Syria. Such a peace is now achievable; every delay – a form of criminal negligence.”

What are we to make of this sudden turnaround? Is the slate wiped quite clean, now that the government has indeed taken a big step forward? Is everything – the deportations, the killing of children, the Lebanese horror – to be totally forgotten in our present peace euphoria?

It is still a fact that Prime Minister Rabin, with the full public backing of Foreign Minister Peres, ordered the bombing and destruction of Lebanese villages – with the proclaimed aim of creating hundreds of thousands of refugees, and with the “side-effect” of killing 114 civilians (by official IDF figures). This falls into the internationally recognized criteria of war crimes – as the professors unequivocally stated in their petition, as Rani Talmor repeatedly maintained in the series of *Hadashot* articles which

got her in conflict with editor Yo’el Esteron and finally cost her her job.

For Rabin, there is no contradiction whatsoever between doing all this while at the same time engaging in secret peace talks. He is a disciple of Henry Kissinger, who sent the American Air Force to bomb Hanoi in order to win points in his negotiations with the Vietnamese... And de Gaulle committed horrible crimes in Algeria before finally pulling the French Army out of there.

In Israel, as elsewhere, peace is not made by a government of peace activists, but by the same establishment which had conducted the war – an establishment forced to change course by a set of changing circumstances, in which our decades-long protest has been one of the factors. When at last they move towards peace, we support them – but we keep our eyes open.

Adam Keller

The Jerusalem taboo

Wednesday July 21, at 5.00, some hundred Gush Shalom activists demonstrated outside the Old City wall of Jerusalem. Near the Notre-Dame Hotel, a long line faced the motorists and others who passed by, with slogans against the ongoing annexation of East Jerusalem, and in favor of making Jerusalem the exemplary capital of two states, Israel and Palestine – living peacefully side by side. The demonstrators also called upon the government to invite PLO leader Yasser Arafat to Jerusalem.

After the banners were folded, several senior peace activists made speeches, standing on an improvised podium on the lawn next to the road. Among the speakers were representatives of **Women in Black**, **Yesh Gvul**, the **ICIPP** (Matti Peled and Haim Bar’am) as well as East Jerusalem personality Ziad Abu Zayad.

It was a taboo-breaking event. For the first time, an effort was made to shake the walls of hypocrisy surrounding the issue of Jerusalem. The concept of “United Jerusalem” is a virtual holy cow in Israeli politics, which neither right nor left dare touch. However, ordinary Israelis are well aware of the reality: most of them keep out of East Jerusalem, treating it as enemy territory, held down with difficulty by the Israeli forces.

From different angles, all speakers came to the conclusion that *a city divided between oppressors and oppressed is by definition not united*. Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Ornan Yekutieli, of the Meretz faction, participated in the **Gush Shalom** demonstration – but did not go as far as mounting the platform.

The action was featured by the evening television news.

■ Without direct connection – but at the same time – Jerusalem City Councilor Moshe Amirav broke away from Meretz to form his own faction, **Peace for Jerusalem**, contesting the municipal elections on a similar *One City – Two Capitals* program. A controversial element of Amirav’s strategy is his

request that the PLO will bring the East Jerusalem Palestinians to participate in Israeli elections – and vote for his list. The Palestinians never recognized the annexation of East Jerusalem, hence boycotting the elections; supporting Amirav would be a cardinal change of strategy for them.

Whatever the fate of his initiative, the outspoken pronouncements of Moshe Amirav – a man who started his political life in the Likud (see TOI-28/29, p.5) – already helped knock another hole in Israeli politics' biggest taboo.

■ Between June 24 and 26, Janiki Cingoli of the Italian Center for Peace in the Middle East succeeded in bringing together an imposing array of Israeli, Palestinian and European personalities. Participants in the three-day conference would have the satisfaction of seeing most of its resolutions and recommendations implemented, within less than two months, by the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships.

CIPMO, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele 11/12, 20121 Milano, Italy

■ During June, the military government cracked down on the **Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People (PCR)**, located in the West Bank town of Beit Sahur. Four PCR activists were arrested, and two of them “administered to jail” for half a year without trial. In dialogue meetings with Jerusalem peace activists, family members of the imprisoned Palestinians expressed their frustration at the Doves in the Israeli government condoning human rights violations. The PCR has been involved for five years in organizing dialogue meetings. The latest issue of their English-language newsletter, *The Voice of the Voiceless*, reports in detail on four recent meetings.

Other activities of the Centre included a lecture – attended by Israelis and Palestinians – by Michel Warshawski of the **Alternative Information Center**, who talked with expectations about the new **Gush Shalom** movement.

Also, a group of **Hadash** members from Tel-Aviv came to the Centre, and at the conclusion of their visit signed together with the Beit Sahurians a joint statement against the closure.

One of the participants told TOI: *Beit Sahur is a relatively affluent West Bank town, but by just walking in its streets you understand what this closure is about. It is a siege cutting off the population from its resources.*
Contact: PCR, P.O.B. 24, Beit Sahur, West Bank

■ On Friday, July 2, about a dozen **Women in Black**, joined a similar number of women from the Federation of Palestinian Working Women's Committees, of Beit Hanina village in the Jerusalem area. Together they demonstrated beside the highway leading from Jerusalem to Ramallah, just past the checkpoint on the West Bank side. The demonstration – which was preceded by a question and answer session, at which the Palestinian women informed their Israeli visitors of some of the lesser-known details of life under closure – went on for half an hour under the watchful eyes of about a dozen Israeli Border Guards.

Banners in Hebrew, Arabic and English included calls for an end to the closure and to the cutting off of Jerusalem from the West Bank, and equated closure

with apartheid. Perhaps because of the participation of Israeli women, the Palestinian women were not prevented from shouting nationalist slogans. Responses from passing motorists, Israeli as well as Palestinian, were overwhelmingly positive (Maxine Nun).

■ On July 3, a group of Israeli peace activists locked themselves up in a cage made of metal bars, as a protest against the closure of the Occupied Territories. The cage was erected outside East Jerusalem's Augusta Victoria Hospital. Human rights activist Idit Doron, one of the organisers, explained: “This hospital provides medical services to the Palestinians. Some of these services are not available at any other place in the Occupied Territories. A child from Hebron, suffering from haemophilia, was urgently in need of treatment. His parents, however, had to acquire first a special permit to enter Jerusalem. After three days, the army gave them the permit – but the child had already died.

A group of **Meretz Youths** participated and called upon its party's ministers to oppose the closure.

■ On July 4, the Executive Committee of the Histadrut Trade Union Federation met in Tel-Aviv. On the stairs of the Histadrut headquarters a vigil was held by the **Hadash** (Communist) faction in the Histadrut, joined by members of **Meretz**. They were holding signs reading: *Also Palestinian children want to eat!* The demonstrators called for solidarity with the tens of thousands of Palestinian workers who lost their jobs because of the closure, and whose families suffer extreme hardship.

A few days later, a solidarity visit was made to Palestinian trade unionists at Tul-Karm.

■ On July 24, as a joint action of **Peace Now** and **Women's Peace Network**, some fifty Israelis set out for a dialogue meeting with Palestinians. At the Green Line (pre-'67 border) they changed over from an Israeli to a Palestinian bus (in the Occupied Territories, it is the more safe way of traveling). As the organisers emphasized, *this is where the international border will be.*

At the West Bank town of Tul-Karm they were met by a Palestinian group headed by the chair of the town's Red Crescent Society, and including members of local organizations affiliated with the PLO. After hearing a performance by Israeli Arab singer Amal Murkus, the participants divided into seven workshops. At the end of only one day of discussions, they came to a joint statement foreshadowing in many of its elements the Israeli-Palestinian package deal which was revealed shortly afterwards.

Contact: *Peace Now, POB 8159 Jerusalem 93105; Women's Peace Network, P.O.B. 9668, Jerusalem 91090*

■ On the night of August 8, the third *Song of the Dove* festival was held, organised by the Mapam-affiliated **Hashomer Hatza'ir** youth movement. Some ten thousand youths, gathered on the Haifa Beach, listened deep into the night to Israeli singers singing songs of peace. (The previous festivals took place in 1980, after the peace with Egypt was signed, and in 1984 – a time of protests against the Lebanon War.)

■ On August 11, Labor Party youths stood on top of

the party headquarters in Tel-Aviv, confronting thousands of settlers who demonstrated outside the building.

The youths held signs: *Israel – Golan = Peace!*

Several public figures were wondering afterwards why the Labor leadership had failed to mobilise bigger demonstrations confronting the right.

■ During the weekly cabinet meeting, held in Jerusalem on August 15, dozens of **Meretz Youths** demonstrated outside the building. They brought with them a three-metre high alarm clock, bearing the words: *Mr. Rabin, wake up – the time has come to make peace!*; other signs carried read: *Say goodbye to the Territories!* and *Peace is greater than the Golan!* Ofer Sheetrit, the **Meretz Youth** chairperson, announced that the demonstration is the start of a campaign aimed at mobilising Israeli public opinion on behalf of peace, counterbalancing the right-wing street pressure. The ultimate plan was to send a *Peace Key* to Prime Minister Rabin, PLO leader Arafat, Syrian President Assad, and King Hussein of Jordan. *Ofer Sheetrit, c/o Ratz, 21 Tchernichovsky St., Tel-Aviv*

■ According to the **B'tzelem** July report, 232 Palestinian children were shot to death by the Israeli army since the Intifada began, 38 of them in the half year period preceding the publication. Due to the severity of the data, **B'tzelem** – hitherto involved only in collecting and publishing information – decided to initiate a large-scale campaign, with the cooperation of many peace groups.

Several vigils and demonstrations were held, mostly in Jerusalem, leading to some clashes with right-wingers; signatures were collected on a petition and protest postcards distributed. The campaign gained the attention of the media and the Knesset, where a stormy debate took place at the initiative of Meretz KM Naomi Hazan. Originally planned to last 38 days – one day for each child – the campaign was cut short by the outbreak of hostilities in Lebanon; some of the planned actions were converted to anti-war protests.

The **B'tzelem** September report noted that, for the first time in a year, a whole month passed in which no Palestinian child was killed by the army.

B'tzelem, 43 Emek Refaim St. (2nd floor), Jerusalem

Zealots routed

The nationalist-religious group known as The Temple Mount Faithful is perpetually engaged in provocations, aimed at bringing about the destruction of the Jerusalem Al-Aqsa Mosque – Islam's third most holiest. On its ruins, the group would like to reconstruct the Jewish Temple, which stood on the site in Biblical times. (In 1990, one of the group's provocations set off the Temple Mount Massacre, in which eighteen Palestinians got killed).

The group's latest effort took place at July 27, 1993, on which fell the Jewish fast of Tisha'a Be'av, commemorating the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. But on their way up to the Mount they encountered an angry crowd of Jews, no less religious – but of another current. The nationalist

Temple Mount Faithful were accused of blasphemy, as the great sages had forbidden Jews to ascend Temple Mount until the coming of the Messiah. In short, a fistfight soon broke out, and the Faithful, greatly outnumbered, had to beat a hasty retreat. Temple Mount was, for the moment, left alone.

■ On July 23, about a hundred Israeli members of youth movements affiliated to Mapam and the Labor Party set out for Cyprus, to meet with a similar number of youths from the Occupied Territories, Egypt and Syria. This week-long summer camp, organised for the third time by the European Socialist Youth Movements, encountered an unforeseen complication: the outbreak of hostilities in South Lebanon, one day after the summer camp started. As a result, the atmosphere was more tense than in previous camps, held respectively in Sweden and Spain.

Throughout the week, Israeli and Arab youths regarded each other with suspicion. There was a prolonged incident when Israelis accused Palestinians of circumventing the camp's "no flags" rule by hanging clothes out to dry; the clothes bore the colors of the Palestinian flag.

An effort to draft a common statement calling for an end to violence in Lebanon ended in failure: The Israelis insisted on a statement condemning rocket attacks on towns in the northern Israel, while the Palestinians wanted the statement to include a call for Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

The debate degenerated into a shouting match. Suddenly, one of the Palestinian youths took off his shirt and pointed out the scars left from his interrogation by the Israeli Security Service. The 17-year old Shlomit Shoshan told *Yediot Aharonot* (10.8.93): "We were in shock. We knew about such things in the abstract, but here it was a boy with whom we participated in a game the evening before. All Israelis were stunned, silent, and some began crying. Afterwards we thought we should have talked about the victims of Arab terrorism, but none of us is personally a victim. Anyway, we did not come to Cyprus in order to hold a competition in victimology, but to see how we can talk to each other, despite all difficulties."

East Jerusalemite Hana Siniora, one of the organisers, was not discouraged: *Shouting is also a form of dialogue. The end result is positive, and I think it will have an impact on their lives.*

■ On Saturday, July 10, **The Coalition for Nonviolent Action** facilitated a day-long workshop on possible active nonviolent responses to particularly blatant injustices, which require a rapid and radical reaction. The idea grew out of the feeling that during the December 1992 deportations a more unconventional kind of protest would have been appropriate, and that similar situations might come again. Some 20 activists took part. Participants proposed and discussed nightmare scenarios – as well as fitting forms of response.

The second part was devoted to roleplay and

related exercises, designed to help participants learn how they react personally in confrontational situations, how their actions influence the response of "the other side" and how to prevent escalation of violence in such situations. Participants were of various ages, backgrounds, and organizational affiliations, and responses to the program were likewise varied. *Maxine Nunn, POB 32213, Jerusalem*

'Peace at any price!'

On August 27 Beate Zilversmidt wrote the following account; we decided to publish it unchanged.

The "Seven Days of Lebanon" – including the efforts of some Israelis to shout protest – became past history very quickly and the public attention turned to another topic. It was the governmental hide and seek game of either secret or open – but always "unofficial" – meetings with the PLO – making headlines day after day: Yossi Sarid meeting with Nabil Shaath, unofficially but with the prior knowledge of Prime Minister Rabin; Peres denying unconvincingly – and possibly deliberately so – that he had met with a senior PLO official in Stockholm; it is all part of a game which enables the government to have some tryouts without committing itself.

On August 26, in the late afternoon the Tel-Aviv branch of *Gush Shalom* was waiting for Rabin to leave the Hayarkon Street Labor Party headquarters in order to confront him with a giant double portrait – kept in the air by a huge bunch of balloons. In bright, nearly transparent colours, the painter Dan Kedar had put a very mild and peaceful Yasser Arafat shoulder to shoulder with a not less kindhearted Yitzchak Rabin – together against the background of a cloudless blue sky. The slogans were: *No more hesitations, but direct talks! Peace is the only security belt! Every delay is costing lives!*

A foreign journalist – who had also been present at our actions in the week of Lebanon – asked me whether I thought we had any effect. My answer seemed to satisfy her: if only we somewhat counterbalance the pressure of the settlers who stood here two weeks ago – against giving up any territory for peace.

Then, suddenly we were standing face to face with the Prime Minister.

Rabin was obviously looking in our direction before he entered the limousine. Perhaps it was my imagination, but I found in the expression on his face less of the habitual annoyance.

Due to the painter our message was more bright than usual, with the flavour of optimism, of hope and confidence. The Israeli television seemed also caught by this brightness. They gave us a beautiful coverage, and it was only when we saw the television news that we realized how eye-catching our little demonstration was. What artistic craftsmanship can do to get a simple message over the spotlight!

It was, however, something else which really gave me a deep feeling of satisfaction. A woman of the neighborhood addressed us while we were walking, with all the requisites, in the direction of the Labor Party buildings. *Are you there again from the Golan?* she asked. Obviously she took us for settlers who had come to agitate against giving up territory. *No, we said, we are protesting on behalf of peace. What peace? How to make peace?*, the woman wanted to know.

When nobody said a word, I stepped forward and told her in my best Hebrew: *Peace at any price!* I should not have said it, I knew it immediately. Now she could accuse me of being a defaist. But nothing of the sort happened. On the contrary, the woman reacted very positively. *That is wonderful! I am of exactly the same opinion!* It was not difficult to persuade her to come with us, and she became the star of the demonstration. *Why do you think all my sons want to live in America?* she asked whoever was near. *Do I have to give you money, so that you can buy drugs?* she replied to some neighborhood youngsters who, without her presence, would have given us much more trouble.

She insisted on holding up a slogan in Arabic, and talked for half an hour with a foreign correspondent who happened to ask her what the demonstration was about. I heard her say: *When I live with neighbors I cannot go on quarreling with them. What kind of life is that?* Uri Avnery, who feels very responsible for *Gush Shalom*, did not know what to make of this new acquisition already representing us with the press. But for me

it was fine, actually the best thing to happen: to have at once such an understanding with a total stranger! The two of us continued to exchange from time to time: *Peace at any price! Peace with the neighbors!* *Gush Shalom, POB 11112, Tel Aviv*

■ The community of Kibbutz Beit Ha'emek in the north is scourged by a deep rift. Part of the members sympathize with the Golan settlers, members to the same Kibbutz movement. They placed metres-long signs in the fields bordering the high road, reading: *Rabin has no mandate to give up the Golan!* In response, *Peace Now* supporters in the kibbutz put up their own giant banner: *There is a mandate for peace!* During several consecutive nights, the *Peace Now* slogan was torn down – to be replaced each morning. After the third time, it remained standing. Thus, the passing car drivers can decide for themselves...

Judy Ben Et, Kibbutz Beit Ha'emek

■ On August 14, a *Peace Now* rally took place at Kibbutz Beit Ha'emek with participants from neighboring kibbutzim and Arab villages. They were addressed by Labor KMs Yael Dayan and Yossi Katz, who called for direct talks and a Palestinian state. It was the Arab KM Hashem Mahamid (Communists) who explained why, in spite of the blunt human rights violations, he still cherished the hope that this government would in the end achieve peace.

After the rally, some two hundred activists marched to the neighboring Arab village of Kufir Yasif, where a performance by Jewish and Arab singers took place.

Dangerous dancing

The Cultural Center at the Arab town of Majd El Krum in the Galiilee was the scene of a solidarity visit by peace activists on July 31. Less than a year after its founding, the cultural center of this small Arab town within the Green Line had become the target of a Shabak (security service) intimidation campaign – making headlines in the national press.

The "El Baka'a" Center was set up in August 1992, in response to the

town's growing social problems, in particular the increasing number of youthful drugs addicts. With the support of the Jerusalem-based **Hanitzotz** group, a mother's school was opened at the center and funds raised from women's groups all over the world. Already one class is at work – with seventeen women eager to understand what their children learn in school. Other activities include guided youth trips to historical sites, a chess club, musical training and instruction for the local choir, as well as a 30-member folk dancing troupe – which specializes in the Palestinian Debka.

During the Muslim holiday of Id-El-Adha, in June, the Debka group gave a performance at the town's main square to an enthusiastic audience of some two thousand people, among them the local mayor. On the occasion, some popular Palestinian national songs were sung.

Soon afterwards, several of the people who participate in activities of the cultural center were summoned for "interviews" with a Shabak operative, who exhibited a minute knowledge of their private and public affairs and their family relationships, and "suggested" that they stop visiting the center. Those who proved obdurate were threatened with losing their jobs; threats were also made to damage the businesses of parents who would not prevent their children from attending the center.

A protest petition was signed by many prominent Israelis; European human rights groups wrote letters of protest. The Prime Minister's Office, legally in charge of the Shabak, denied any knowledge of the affair.

Thus far, none of the Shabak threats were carried out.

El Bakaa Cultural Center, Majd El Krum, Israel 20190

■ The organizers of the International Conference on Nonviolence should be congratulated about their sense of timing. Sponsored by **Israelis and Palestinians for Nonviolence**, and **The Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence**, the conference took place in the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center on September 7 and 8 – only hours before the mutual recognition.

On the last moment the Supreme

Court enabled **PCSN** founder **Mu-barak Awad** – deported during the Intifada period – to enter Israel. Awad addressed an audience of Israelis, Palestinians and foreigners, analyzing five years of Intifada and concluded: *It was the nonviolent, mass aspect of the Intifada which made the occupation impossible.*

Contact: *Amos Gvirtz, Kibbutz Shifayim*

■ Until 1948 **Yitzchak Chasson** belonged to the ultra-nationalist **Fighters for the Liberation of Israel** (known internationally as **The Stern Gang**) – the anti-British underground led by **Yitzchak Shamir**.

The Chasson of today – and his wife **Sara**, also an underground veteran – are central activists of the **Secular Humanist Association**. Both are among the peace activists to be found in the places where "every single one counts".

In the spring of 1993, Chasson's autobiography "The old man and me" was published, and became a true writer's debut. The book is written from the point of view of the young Chasson – in a continuing dispute with the old man – the **Yitzchak Chasson** of today. There appeared big articles about the book which is full of a fine sense of humour, and Chasson was interviewed in literary programs. At the same time, some bookshops refused to sell his book. That is how on August 11, the 70-year old Chasson could be found holding a one-man demonstration on the stairs of **Beit Sokolov**, the **Tel-Aviv Journalist's House** – protesting the **Beit Sokolov** bookshop's boycott.

Military discontent

■ Soldiers of a reserve unit who ended a tour of service in the **Gaza Strip** sent a letter full of grievances to **Prime Minister/Defence Minister Yitzchak Rabin**. They complained about "incompetent officers, incomprehensible orders, and weapons in a state of decomposition."

Al Hamishmar, 29.6.93.

■ "I was the operations officer of a battalion stationed at the **Jabaliya Refugee Camp**. Our stronghold at the camp center was the target of repeated attacks by the inhabitants. One day, the battalion commander

(a **Labour Party** member) came on inspection and saw a boy, about six years old, throwing stones in our direction. He ordered me to send a patrol to catch him.

Half an hour later, the commander returned and saw the child still there, and still throwing stones. I told him: "This boy is younger than my own daughters, and anyway the stones can't hit us; he is too far away!" The commander was furious, shouting: "This is subordination!", and he sentenced me on the spot to 28 days' suspended imprisonment, warning me: "If it happens again, you will go to prison, and lose your rank!". The commander then himself ordered two patrols, three jeeps each, to go and catch the boy.

When the kid saw them coming, he ran into an ally too narrow for the jeeps to enter, and by the time they dismounted he had disappeared. They searched for half an hour and came back empty-handed, complaining that the commander was an idiot. (Told to **TOI** by **Shimon Asor**, a **Likud** supporter living in **Holon**.)

■ An unnamed officer of a reserve unit in charge of guarding one of the **Gaza Strip** military installations talked to **Ha'olam Hazeh**:

"Until the first year of the Intifada, there was no problem in enlisting the sixty reservists required for a month's tour of duty. Since then, every year it becomes more problematic. We started to send out a double number of call-up orders, but later even that was not enough. Now, to get 60 reservists, we have to dispatch 180 call-up orders a month in advance.

By military regulations, we must give everybody an opportunity to see the **Commanding Officer**, two weeks prior to enlistment, in order to ask for exemption. In the past, only a few did it, but now, nearly all of them ask for interviews with the **C.O.** We never had such a situation. They cry real tears, they tell heart-rending stories about their families, they plead, some of them threaten the **Commanding Officer**, a few become really violent. It is extremely difficult to select from them the sixty we need. And there is no assurance that all of the sixty whom we did not grant exemption will really show up on the appointed day.

From officers in other units I hear

similar stories. The problem is now with soldiers who never were problematic before; the ordinary guys. If it goes on like this, I don't know where it will end (*Ha'olam Hazeh*, 30.6.93).

■ As this year's new conscripts arrived at the Tel-Hashomer Induction Base, some twenty members of **Yesh Gvul** held a vigil outside the gates, joined by members of **The Highschool Group**. Their signs called upon the conscripts not to volunteer for the notorious Special Units, and expressed support for those who would refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories.

Yesh Gvul, POB 6953, Jerusalem

■ *General Amnon Shahak, the Deputy Chief-of Staff, told military correspondents:* The army is dissatisfied with the quality of the new conscripts, many of whom were found unfit for service. There is a considerable increase in the number of conscripts arrested for refusing to serve in the army or refusing to join the units to which they were posted. The army has no explanation for this disturbing phenomenon. We have to study it and find answers (*Ma'ariv*, 1.9.93).

■ Company G, Armoured Corps Battalion 395, was formed of conscripts in the early 1970s. They became a closely-knit reserve unit, serving together one month or more a year. While many of them made good careers in civilian life, the unit became a circle of friends who take part in each other's family events, and the distance between the unit's officers and soldiers became blurred.

With the Intifada outbreak the company was, like many others, charged with patrolling the alleys of Gaza Strip refugee camps. In December 1992, three of their men were ambushed and killed by armed Palestinians.

The soldiers had seen battlefields in several wars, but nothing had been as devastating for them as the routine patrolling in Gaza. "When the month is over, you come back home and feel a sucker. You hear from all sides how foolish you are for serving in Gaza or Nablus and how others succeed in avoiding it. There are many who support a warlike policy, but laugh at you for going to Gaza" (reservist Shlomo Dror in *Ha'ir*, August 13).

It was the wives of some of the company's members who first succeeded in getting the media interested (*see TOI-57, p.10*). After several papers wrote about their complaints, a huge lot of letters arrived from reservists - and reservists' wives - who expressed similar grievances. Soon it was decided to form **The Association of Reservists for Equal Service**, demanding equal periods of annual service for combatant and non-combatant reservists. (Now, a far shorter service is required from the latter.)

It came to a heated debate in the Knesset. An Israeli television crew got permission to visit a reserve unit at Kabatiya, West Bank, and lengthy interviews with angry reservists were broadcast on the Friday evening news of July 2.

On August 24, at the founding conference of the newly-formed association held on the premises of the Armoured Corps House in Tel-Aviv, Knesset Member Ran Cohen - himself a reserve colonel - was among the participants. One of the speakers, artillery major Haim Mendelsohn, threatened to send his commission back to Chief-of-Staff Barak. Sergeant Danny Mizrahi was quoted in *Hadashot* (25.8.93) as saying: *We will no longer be General Barak's suckers! If there is no justice, there will be mutiny!*

A few days later, the government announced the imminent withdrawal from the Gaza Strip...

Contact: *Reservists' Association, c/o Shlomo Dror, Hadashot Newspaper, 108 Yigal Alon St., Tel-Aviv 67891*

(Continued from page 12)

This thorny and emotional issue haunted Israeli-Palestinian relations since 1948.

- The refugees of 1967 (known as "the displaced Palestinians" and whose number is estimated at several hundred thousands) may get a chance to return to the West Bank and Gaza, already during the interim period. (The agreement stipulates that the procedures will be worked out "by mutual consent", so that Israel will have a veto.)

- Starting with January 13, 1994, "transfer of authority" from Israel to the Palestinians will begin throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Not only will the Palestinians get authority over education and culture, health,

social welfare and tourism, they will also be able to levy taxes, which is one of the main hallmarks of independence, and which Israel hitherto refused to hand over.

- The elected Palestinian Council will have legislative power in many spheres. In the remaining spheres, Israel and the Palestinian Council will "jointly inspect" all of the "military laws and directives", which opens the way to dismantling the occupation's legal structures.

- Palestinian authorities will be charged with building a new port at Gaza, as well as electricity, environment, exports and other issues.

- In the same article there are hidden references to two crucial issues: land and water. There is no explicit mention of "state lands", hitherto regarded by Israel as a reservoir of land for the use of Israeli settlers. This absence of "state lands" from the list of things left under Israeli control is to be considered a Palestinian achievement.

- With the swearing-in of the Palestinian Council, the Israeli "civil administration" (hated by the Palestinians) will be abolished.

- At the same time, the military government will be "withdrawn": not formally abolished, but physically removed from the Palestinian towns and villages.

- "A strong (Palestinian) police force will be formed." This is taken from Camp David, but the definition of the police's task was widened considerably: not only "maintaining public order," as in Camp David, but also "internal security". Thus, the Palestinian force designated "police" will, in practice, combine the functions of police and security service, as well as of a semi-military militia.

- Until June 13, 1994, the Israeli army will withdraw from all populated areas throughout the West Bank, with maintenance of order and security being handed over to the Palestinian police.

- Inhabitants of East Jerusalem will have the right "to participate in the elections process" to the Palestinian Council. This definition leaves open the question whether they would be allowed only to vote (as Israel thus far agreed) or also to be elected (as the Palestinians demand).

- In preparation for the elections,

there will be established arrangements for operating mass communications media, opening the possibility of a Palestinian television.

– “The future status of displaced Palestinians, who were registered on June 4, 1967, will not be impaired by their inability, due to practical reasons, to participate in the elections process.” This is another hint at the possibility that the displaced Palestinians would be allowed to return.

– On November 14, 1993, will start Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and “the Jericho territory.” The withdrawal will end on on January 13, 1994.

– In these areas, “The Palestinian representatives will take over all authority, with the exception of external security, settlements, Israeli citizens, and foreign relations.”

– Internal security will be in the hands of the Palestinian police “recruited both locally and abroad.” The proportion between the two kinds of policemen is not specified.

– There will be “a temporary foreign international presence.” Here, again, a main Palestinian demand was accepted: to have U.N. or other foreign forces (for example, from Scandinavia) take temporary control of the area, filling the gap between the Israeli army’s withdrawal and the settling in of the Palestinian police.

– Arrangements will be made for “safe transit” of persons and vehicles between the Gaza Strip and the Jericho territory. That implies a recognition of the unity of the Palestinian territory.

– Arrangements will be established for transit from the Gaza Strip to Egypt and from Jericho to Jordan, implying that the Palestinians may gain a share in controlling the border passes.

– Even before the elected Palestinian Council is established the offices of the Palestinian authorities (for the whole West Bank) would be located in Gaza and Jericho.

– Aside from the taxes levied by the Palestinians, they will continue getting from Israel the budgets now allocated to the “civilian administration.”

What the Israeli side achieved

In the mutual recognition doc-

uments the Israelis achieved: invalidation of the Palestinian Covenant articles which oppose the existence of Israel; official recognition of Israel’s right to exist; an end to terrorism and violence.

The agreement itself provides for:

– Continued Israeli control over external security (defending the territory against outsiders), the security of settlements and the personal security of Israelis (settlers or civilians) wherever they may be found in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

– The Israeli army’s right to use the roads in the Gaza Strip and “the Jericho territory.” (The exact size and boundaries of that territory is not yet defined.)

– The interim agreement will not include East Jerusalem, except that its inhabitants could participate in the Palestinian elections. The ultimate fate of Jerusalem remains open until the permanent status negotiations. There is no reference to the possibility of continued establishment of new Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem areas beyond the 1967 border; possibly an oral agreement on this issue exists.

– The ultimate fate of the settlements is left open until the permanent status negotiations.

– Even though the internal logic of the agreement may point towards a Palestinian state, this is not explicitly said. In the permanent status negotiations, the government of Israel could propose a different kind of Palestinian entity.

– On September 13, 1993, an Israeli-Palestinian coordinating committee is supposed to be created. It is to deal with “matters of common interest.” (These are not specifically enumerated, but it can be guessed that the question of water sources is included.)

– Also on September 13, 1993, an Israeli-Palestinian committee for economic coordination is to be formed, for “development of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel.”

– Jordan and Egypt are to be included, though in a rather vague way. In particular, they are assigned a role in connection with the return of the 1967 displaced Palestinians.

– Disagreements are to be resolved through the coordinating committee, with the possibility of referring unresolved problems to international arbitration.

– Two annexes, written under the personal influence of Foreign Minister Peres, refer to cooperation on energy, establishing a joint petrochemical complex, financial cooperation, transportation from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to other states, a free trade zone, industrial cooperation, as well as cooperation on labor, communications, and preservation of the environment.

– There is a mention of cooperation in digging a mediterranean-dead sea canal, to start at Gaza, and joint exploitation of the dead sea.

Conclusion

The Israeli-Palestinian document is a full-fledged agreement, going far beyond the concept of “Gaza and Jericho first” and the stipulations of Camp David. It creates a firm base for a future Israeli-Palestinian peace. Many points remain open, and will probably be the subject of future debates and struggles. The peace forces on both sides still have a substantial role, to help overcome these problems. But the thing is that the agreement creates a dynamism which will be stronger than words. This is the main reason for optimism.

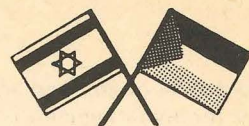
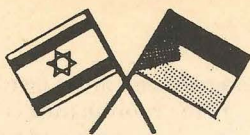
Uri Avnery

Business for peace

Israeli Big Business was practically unanimous in supporting the Israeli-Palestinian Accord. When the news came, the Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange soared to unprecedented heights, and Israel’s eighteen foremost industrialists placed giant advertisements warmly congratulating the government. This came as no surprise: over the past year, the Israeli Manufacturers’ Association and the Chambers of Commerce maintained an ongoing dialogue with their Palestinian counterparts (see TOI-57, p.12).

Israeli capitalists repeatedly urged the government to make peace, arguing that the economic advantages from opening the borders with the Arab World far outweigh any advantage Israel derives from keeping the Occupied Territories.

Ephraim Rainer of Ha’aretz remarked: a right-wing which does not have the business community on its side is bound to fail.



**The agreement:
open parts, secret parts, hints
by Uri Avnery**

Numerous articles appear about the Israeli-Palestinian agreement. Different specialists come to different conclusions. It is not easy to get a clear overall picture of such a legal-political document.

Politicians on both sides have an interest in emphasizing certain aspects, and hiding or glossing over other parts. Uri Avnery – a veteran of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, with much experience of the underlying sensitivities on both sides – analyzes what the carefully balanced document gives to either side.

What the Palestinian side achieved

The main Palestinian achievement is in the mutual agreement documents, linked to the agreement but not part of it. For the first time, Israel explicitly recognizes the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people (and actually, as a de-facto government). This is an achievement of inestimable value to any national liberation movement in the pre-state phase.

Not explicitly mentioned in any agreement, but obviously already agreed upon, is the stipulation that Yasser Arafat himself could, within months, take up residence at Gaza and/or Jericho, and that the PLO headquarters would be relocated there.

In the agreement itself, the Palestinians achieved the following:

- Reference to "mutual legitimate political rights." The words "legitimate political rights" place the Palestinians a step closer to recognition of their right to self-determination.

- Characterization of the desired peace as "just" as well as "comprehensive" and "lasting." "A just peace" is a traditional Palestinian formulation, hitherto rejected by Israel.

- The permanent agreement is to be "based upon Security Council resolutions 242 and 338". Resolution 242 states that acquisition of territory by war is inadmissible, and

mentions Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories (or, according to the interpretation based on the French text, the occupied territories). Basing the permanent agreement on 242 implies territorial withdrawal in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

- The permanent agreement would also lead to "implementation" of resolutions 242 and 338. Inclusion of the term "implementation" indicates that 242 is not something to be argued about, but to be implemented.

Stop press: on September 12, hundreds of women filled the Jerusalem air with balloons, in a cheerful demonstration of support for the agreement.

As this goes into print, preparations are made for a Peace Now torchlight march in Jerusalem and thousands of participants are expected. The march is to take place during the Rabin-Arafat-Clinton signing ceremony, which will be shown on a giant television screen.

- The interim agreement is defined as being "an integral part of the overall peace process" – thus establishing a clear link between the interim agreement and the permanent agreement.

- "The Palestinian people" is repeatedly mentioned throughout the agreement. At Camp David, Israel did sign a document mentioning that term. However, in an annex to the Camp David Accords, Begin immediately disavowed that acceptance.

- Elections to the Palestinian Self-Governing Council are to be "monitored by international observers" (a demand up to now refused by Israel).

- The elections process is to be safeguarded by "the Palestinian police", to be formed previous to the elections.

- The elections are to take place "no later" than June 13, 1994, nine months after the September 13, 1993 signing of the agreement.

- Even before that, a temporary Palestinian Council is to be formed. Though that is not explicitly stated, obviously the PLO will appoint it.

- Jurisdiction of the Palestinian Self-Governing Council is "to cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory". This is a clear territorial definition of the kind Israeli hitherto refused: a cardinal achievement for the Palestinians. No longer are they offered a mere "autonomy for persons", which would imply an administrative autonomy in an area under an overall Israeli rule. Instead, the agreement sets up a Palestinian self-governing authority having control over territory, with Israeli settlements constituting an anomaly.

- The very term "autonomy", hated by the Palestinians because of the connotations Israel gave to it, is excluded from the agreement.

- "The parties regard the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved throughout the interim period" – thus, the pre-'67 border is effectively restored, defining the territory of the Palestinian entity. (In passing, this document also puts an end to use of the Israeli annexationist term "Judea and Samaria".)

- The interim period, lasting no more than five years, is to begin on January 14, 1994, and hence, to end "no later" than the same date in 1999. "No later", but there is nothing to prevent the two parties, by mutual consent, from ending it earlier; developments on the ground, for example the need to confront the zealots on both sides, may well force such a decision.

- Negotiations on the permanent status are to begin no later than January 14, 1996.

- It is explicitly stated that the issue of Jerusalem will figure on the agenda of these "permanent status" negotiations. Hitherto, the Israeli side insisted that exclusive Israeli rule of all Jerusalem is, and will always remain, non-negotiable.

- In the permanent status negotiations, the fate of the settlements will also be discussed, as will be "the borders, relationships and cooperation with other neighbors," and, last but not least, the refugee problem (i.e. "the right of return").

Continuation on page 10