

The Other Israel

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INTRODUCTION

After many weeks of confused and complex negotiations, Israel has a government: the so-called "Government of National Unity". Very few, if any, of Israel's citizens greeted this government with enthusiasm, or an overwhelming confidence, and for a good reason. It is extremely unlikely that this government will find a solution to any of Israel's problems.

Regarding Israel's most important problem, the Palestinian question, the government is unable to take the slightest initiative without coming apart immediately.

The invitation to King Hussein of Jordan, issued at Shimon Peres' inauguration speech, was nothing but empty lip-service. Neither Hussein nor any other Arab leader can open negotiations with a government committed to "maintaining and developing" all the settlements in the occupied territories and to building at least five new ones within the next year; a government in which the supporters of complete annexation have veto power over any decision. One of the first measures taken by the new government was the threat to close down Raymonda Tawil's Palestine Press Services and Al-Awdah magazine in East Jerusalem (see separate article), an ominous beginning of its policy towards the population of the occupied territories.

Concerning withdrawal from Lebanon, Defense Minister Rabin has nothing better to offer than a vague "hope" that withdrawal might take place "within a year", at the same time asking the soldiers to "remain patient and steadfast for the time being". Moreover, the "withdrawal" meant by the government is, in reality, no more than a replacement of direct Israeli rule by that of brutal, murderous Israeli-controlled mercenaries, the so-called "South Lebanon Army". Government plans to hand over South Lebanon to these mercenaries continue unchanged, despite the massacre in Sukhmur village, in which soldiers of the "South Lebanon Army" killed thirteen civilians and wounded thirty more. Thus, there is a good chance that Israeli occupation of South Lebanon will continue indefinitely, in one form or another.

The chief instigator of the Lebanon War, Ariel Sharon, has been rehabilitated, and given the

commerce and industry portfolio, whose budgets Sharon can use to encourage industry in the West Bank settlements. Sharon has also been included in the 10-member inner cabinet, where all important decisions will be made.

For Sharon, these are but stepping stones towards his final goal - the prime-ministry. The power struggle within the Likud is now going on openly, with Sharon perpetually breathing down Shamir's neck. Thanks to Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, Sharon is much closer to achieving his ultimate purpose, which would be a disaster for Israel and for the whole Middle East.

The main official reason for the formation of the "National Unity Government" was the need to solve Israel's deepening economic crisis. This reasoning was based on a completely fallacious assumption: that the economic and political spheres can be separated from each other; that Israel could lower its inflation rate while continuing its imperial ventures in Lebanon and the West Bank, and while maintaining and strengthening one of the mightiest military machines in the world. That, of course, is completely impossible. The government is, thus, unable to formulate any coherent plan for economic recovery. All it can do is to make the citizens of Israel bear a heavier and heavier load, the greater part of which is borne by the weaker and poorer sections of Israeli society.

Obviously, there is an urgent need for a strong and determined opposition, which will firmly struggle against this government, both inside and outside the Knesset. An important role may be played by Mapam, which broke its fifteen-years' alliance with the Labor Party because of its opposition to the Labor-Likud coalition. However, a whole generation has passed since Mapam was a radical opposition party. It remains to be seen how effective it would be now, how firmly it would be ready to oppose its former Labor partners, and how ready it would be to cooperate with other opposition parties, such as the Progressive List for Peace, in forming a strong dovish opposition block. The prospects are not very promising.

The Editor

Readers visiting Israel and wishing to meet with ICIPP members are invited to call Adam Keller in Tel-Aviv, phone number (03) 227124.



The Peace Struggle and the Struggle Against Racism

As mentioned in the previous issue of *The Other Israel*, during the months preceding the general elections extra-parliamentary activity in Israel came to an almost complete halt. Public attention was focused on the elections, and most peace activists joined the election campaigns of various parties, having little or no time left for anything else.

On July 24th, the situation changed literally overnight, as soon as the election of Rabbi Meir Kahane to the Knesset was announced. The election of an open racist and fascist, whose slogans and program closely resemble Nazi ideology, shocked many people who had not taken seriously the previous manifestations of racism in Israel (see issue No 4-5). The ever more provocative statements and actions of Kahane and his supporters galvanised many Israelis into action.

Condemnation of Kahane was voiced by a broad political spectrum, including large parts of the big establishment parties and organizations. Such figures as the mayors of Haifa and Jerusalem and President Haim Herzog took active action against Kahane. Several parties proposed anti-racism bills in the Knesset. In the communications media, an argument broke out concerning the way to handle Kahane: Some journalists and papers decided to denounce him as strongly as possible, while others claimed he should be completely boycotted, as any kind of publicity helps him.

However, condemnation of Kahane was by no means unanimous. Alarming, Kahane found sympathisers deep within the Israeli political system, not only in the Likud, but even in the Labor party. (On elections night, Labor M. K. Arik Nehemkin declared publicly that "Kahane is right in many things." This statement did not prevent Shimon Peres from appointing Nehemkin as minister of agriculture in the "National Unity Government".)

Repeatedly, the Israeli police had shown itself unwilling to take any firm action against Kahane and his supporters. And most important, it is horribly clear that Kahane's views enjoy support among large parts of the Israeli public. In particular, the unemployed — who are becoming more numerous as Israel's economic crisis grows worse — are an easy prey to racism, which offers them an easy scapegoat in the Arab workers. Thus, it is clear that the anti-racist struggle must be directed not only at the man Kahane, but at the whole phenomenon of Kahanism.

The anti-racist activities are carried out both by existing organizations and parties, and by new ones which sprang up, such as "Citizens Against Racism" and "Women Against Racism". At the same time, many of the older organizations, notably "Peace Now", are going through internal crises, and were almost completely inactive, even on some occasions where they were sorely needed. It seems that, like the Israeli political scene in general, the

Israeli peace movement is going through a period of change. It is to be hoped it will emerge stronger.

The following is a list of significant events in the period from the July 23rd elections to the end of September. To make the context clear, some of the most outrageous racist assaults have also been listed.

Readers will note the repeated references to Um-El-Fahm. For some reason, Rabbi Kahane has selected this Arab town as a test-case for his racist theories. Soon after the elections he declared that he would come there to "open an emigration office" in Um-El-Fahm and "encourage" its Arab inhabitants to leave Israel. This caused a wave of sympathy for Um-El-Fahm, a town which is heavily discriminated against by the Israeli government. (Despite having more than 25,000 inhabitants, the Israeli Ministry of the Interior still classes Um-El-Fahm as "a village", and almost no resources are allocated to its development.)

24/7 — Upon learning of his elections victory, Kahane, accompanied by hundreds of his supporters, who were armed and wore yellow shirts,* held a "victory parade" through the old city of Jerusalem, threatening and assaulting the Arab merchants. The police did not interfere, and Kahane's men later claimed some policemen embraced them and congratulated them on their victory.

After these events were published, the commander of the Jerusalem Police announced they will be "investigated" but as late as September 30th, no results were announced.

26/7 — Members of "Netivot Shalom", a movement of religious doves, demonstrated along the route taken by Kahane's thugs in the old city of Jerusalem, and distributed leaflets in Hebrew and Arabic, condemning Kahane's actions as contrary to the spirit of Judaism.

27-28/7 — Two protest meetings took part in Um-El-Fahm, in protest of Kahane's threats. The second meeting, organized by the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), was attended by hundreds of Arabs and Jews. At the same time, some ten solidarity delegations from, among others, kibbutzim, two Jewish towns and the Histadrut (trade union federation) visited the Um-El-Fahm municipality.

29/7 — A group of professors from Tel-Aviv University signed a petition calling upon all the political parties to completely boycott Kahane.

— An organization of holocaust victims and former anti-Nazi fighters published a statement condemning Kahane.

Two Arab workers in a baker's shop in Netivot (a Negev town) were assaulted by three thugs, who stole loaves of bread and said: "We are

* Like many other fascist practices, Kahane's followers adopted the custom of wearing shirts of a similar color: yellow t-shirts on which a big black fist is emblazoned.



Kahane's men. You Arabs are our slaves!" A police spokesman said that "the brawl is being investigated," and that "no political motives have been proved".

- A meeting of Arab trade unionists called for Jewish-Arab cooperation against racism.

31/7 - Members of the Tel-Aviv Student union, controlled by a center-left coalition (see issue N° 8) held a vigil in front of "Yad Vashem" (the Museum of the Holocaust in Jerusalem), to point out the similarities between Kahane's teachings and those of the Nazis.

1/8 - At a meeting with senior police officers, The Attorney-General declared that the police will act firmly against lawbreaking by members of Kahane's movement. Concerning the July 24th events, however, the police had nothing to say beyond "the investigation continues".

Several of Kahane's supporters broke into a press conference in Tel-Aviv, held by the municipality of Um-El-Fahm. Policemen arrested three of the attackers and two members of the Communist Party, who tried to stop them. (The mayor of Um-El-Fahm is a supporter of the Communist Party, though not a member). A police spokesman claimed all five were "involved in a brawl" and would be prosecuted.

2/8 - A soldier was jailed for 28 days, for refusing to serve in Lebanon. The soldier, an immigrant from the U.S., had served a prison term there for refusing to serve in the American Army during the Vietnam War. *

3/8 - Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, sent letters to all the parties in the Knesset, calling upon them to enact an anti-racist law. 6,000 citizens signed a petition supporting his demand.

4/8 - Tens of thousands of Jews and Arabs participated in what was probably, the biggest joint Jewish-Arab demonstration in the history of Israel. The demonstration took place in the football stadium of Um-el-Fahm. The crowd was addressed by fifteen Knesset Members from five political parties ranging from The Labor Party and Mapam, through CRM to the PLP and The Communist Party.

Other speakers included reform and conservative rabbis, who declared that they came to show the Arab inhabitants that not every rabbi is a Kahane.

6/8 - Professors from the Haifa Technion signed a petition against a Technion by-law which discriminates against Arab students. The by-law, concerning admittance, gives preference to students who served in the army, which means in practice, an almost complete exclusion of Arab students from the more important faculties.

8/8 - 13/8 - Members of the Labor-affiliated youth movements held a vigil against Kahane in front of the Knesset.

9/8 - In a surprise overnight move, a new Jewish settlement was established in the heart of Hebron, in a clear effort by the outgoing Likud government to establish a fait accompli.

11/8 - About fifty members of the CRM*, led by the new M. K.'s Mordechai Bar-On and Ran Cohen, demonstrated in Hebron against the new settlement there. It should be noted that the paralysed condition of the "Peace Now" movement prevented a broader and larger demonstration from taking place.

* The CRM (Civil Rights Movement) is a political party, represented by three members of the present Knesset: Shulamit Aloni, Mordechai Bar-On and Ran Cohen. It is not to be confused with the Israeli Civil Rights Association and the League For Human And Civil Rights - two non-parliamentary organizations, mentioned elsewhere in this chronicle.

12/8 - Thirty Israeli painters and sculptors, members of the Israeli Artists' Association demonstrated at Jabaliah refugee camp, near Gaza, in protest against the six-months' term of imprisonment imposed on the painter Fathi Raban, an inhabitant of the camp. Raban was convicted of "subversion" because he used, in his paintings, the colors of the Palestinian Flag: red, green, black and white. As an act of protest, the Israeli painters publicly painted pictures using the same colours.

This demonstration and the efforts of such organizations as the Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights succeeded in obtaining Raban's release at the beginning of September.

13/8 - As the new Knesset convened for its first meeting, several thousand demonstrators, organized by the new "Citizens Against Racism" movement, protested outside. They were addressed by several speakers, including Mayor Teddy Kollek.

When the new Knesset members were sworn in, Kahane declared that wherever God's Laws contradict those of the Knesset, he would obey God. (In Kahane's view, God's Law requires the expulsion of all Arabs from Israel).

At the same time, several of Kahane's Yellow Shirts arrived at the Arab town of Shefar'am, armed with pitchforks, claiming they wanted to clean the old Jewish cemetery of the town. Police prevented them from entering the town. The mayor of Shefar'am said the municipality will itself clean the cemetery.

14/8 - A meeting of the Arab Mayors' Committee declared that its members will prevent the entry of Kahane's men into any Arab town or village, and that the various Arab communities will support each other in resisting Kahane.

15/8 - 19/8 - A voluntary work camp took place in Nazareth, to help the municipality, which receives little support from the government. The participants, who included many Jews and volunteers from abroad, regarded it an anti-racist demonstration. The police attempted to disrupt the event by making raids at night and arresting thirteen volunteers from the occupied territories, citing a regulation forbidding inhabitants of the territories to sleep in Israel. (This regulation is almost never enforced towards thousands of Arab workers, on

* In recent months, the number of soldiers jailed has lessened, as in most cases the army prefers to let them serve in other places and get the affair finished quietly.



whom the Israeli economy depends for hard and non-paying jobs.)

16/8 – Police in Haifa violently broke up an anti-Kahane demonstration, arresting several participants.

18/8 – M. K.'s Matti Peled and Muhamad Miari of the PLP visited Al-Najah University in Nablus, which was closed by the military authorities.

18/8 - 25/8 – A voluntary workcamp took place in Jaffa, to help an Arab population which is being neglected by the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa municipality.

19/8 – The Likud mayor of Dimona, a Negev town, called for a stop to investment in the occupied territories settlements, because of the deteriorating situation of the "development towns."

– Several hundred demonstrators confronted Kahane and his men in Haifa. The anti-Kahane demonstrators were headed by Haifa mayor Arieh Gur'el, who made a rude gesture in Kahane's direction after being reviled by Kahane's supporters.

– Efrat and Ehud Spiegel, the mother and brother of a soldier who was killed in Lebanon, held a vigil at the prime minister's office, demanding the formation of a new commission of inquiry on the Lebanon War.

21/8 - 23/8 – In Geneva, the U.N. Conference of non-governmental organizations on the Question of Palestine took place. Amnon Zichrony of the ICIPP and Emil Tuma of the Communist Party were elected to the permanent committee, whose task is to continue the conference's activity and efforts to achieve peace.

22/8 – Kahane held the first conference of his party in Jerusalem, in which the slogans used included: "Arabs are slaves" and "Arabs are cockroaches – they should be crushed." In his speech, Kahane set the date for his visit to Um-El-Fahm: August 20th.

23/8 – A soldier was jailed for 14 days for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

26/8 – Two thousand Jewish and Arab demonstrators, including the deputy mayor, greeted Kahane in Acre. In a speech to 300 of his supporters Kahane called the Arabs "dogs" and used such expressions as: "Who says a dead Arab is a good Arab? A dead Arab also stinks!". Afterwards, several members of the Acre municipal council were summoned to the police and investigated for having heckled Kahane and disturbed his speech.

– Four Knesset members were assaulted by Kahane's thugs, outside Tel-Mond Prison, where the suspected members of the anti-Arab terrorist underground are held. The four attempted to enter the prison, in order to check the conditions under which the alleged terrorists are held. (The preferential treatment given to these prisoners had aroused much indignation in Israeli public opinion.) They were denied entrance, however, by order of Dr. Yosef Burg, the Interior Minister, who claimed such visits should be cleared with him beforehand.

Kahane's thugs, who were waiting near the gate, assaulted the M. K.'s, hitting some of them, including M. K. Mordechai Wirszuwski, who is a cripple. Police forces arrived on the spot only half an hour later.

27/8 – About 50 people demonstrated in front of Dr. Burg's house, to protest his conduct in the Tel-Mond affair.

28/8 - 29/8 – Tension in Um-El-Fahm grew as the time of Kahane's "visit" drew near. The Um-El-Fahm municipality declared a general strike in the town. Several hundred Jewish supporters came to stay in overnight.

Meanwhile, senior police officers made it clear they did not intend to stop Kahane from entering the town, and Dr. Burg told the Mayor, in a telephone conversation, that he would be "held responsible for keeping the peace". Kahane himself declared that his men will come armed, and "they will know when to use their weapons."

Early in the morning large police forces entered Um-El-Fahm, to protect Kahane during his "visit." At the same time, thousands of Jewish demonstrators, including a dozen M. K.'s and the mayor of Haifa, also entered the town (many of them were stopped by police roadblocks). Tension grew for several hours, as Jews and Arabs prepared to form a living wall and stop Kahane. At noon, the radio announced that Kahane had passed a police roadblock some 10 kilometers distant and was about to enter Um-El-Fahm. Immediately on hearing this, some inhabitants started throwing stones at the police, which responded by shooting tear gas at the demonstrators. Labor M. K. Nava Arad lost consciousness, after breathing a large dose of tear gas. Only at this time did the inspector-general of the Israeli police decide to stop Kahane from entering.

During the following week the police made nightly raids on Um-El-Fahm, arresting dozens of inhabitants who were charged with disturbing the peace.

During the Um-El-Fahm demonstration, the yellow star emblem – originally used by the Nazis to mark the Jews under their domination – was first adopted as the emblem of the Israeli anti-racists. It was, then and subsequently, worn proudly by Jews protesting the horror of Jewish racism.

29/8 – Members of "Parents Against Silence" picketed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, where Shimon Peres and Ytzhak Shamir were negotiating, holding placards reading: "While you wrangle, our sons die in Lebanon!"

31/8 – In "retaliation" for being foiled in Um-El-Fahm, Kahane announced that his men will prevent the entry of Arab workers into Beit-Shemesh and Or-Yehuda – two towns where Kahane got a large proportion of the votes, and where there are many unemployed. Quick preventive action by the police stopped this plan. This was the first real firm action taken by the police against Kahane since his election to the Knesset.

1/9 – A delegation of the Israeli Civil Rights Association visited Um-El-Fahm. Its members protested the 14-day detention of dozens of the inhabitants, while Kahane's men, who were detained, were released after a few hours.

5/9 – Yossi Sagi and Giuliano Mer are two young Israelis, living in a flat, in the older part of Tel Aviv. Yossi Sagi is a Jew, Giuliano Mer – the son of

On September 5th., 1984, when Yossi Sagi was alone in the flat, two thugs broke in, assaulted him



and cut his face with a razor blade, shouting: "You are desecrating the Jewish Religion - if you continue living with an Arab, we will murder you!"

Later the same day, Yossi Sagi received a second shock. When policemen arrived at the hospital where he was treated, they seemed interested, not in the assailants' identity, but in the nature of Sagi's relations with Giuliano Mer. Obviously, the police, like the assailants, assumed the relations to be homosexual - which Sagi and Mer hotly deny (though, were it true, it would be nobody's business but theirs). The police also refused to protect the apartment, despite constant telephone threats, threatening to "come again and finish you". Fortunately, the two's many friends and the members of various organizations volunteered to guard the apartment, in the police's stead. Sagi was also fired from a restaurant where he was working as a waiter, his boss claiming: "I don't want trouble here". Sagi and Mer are not intimidated by the incident, and intend to continue living together.

On September 7th. they stood at the head of an anti-racist demonstration in central Tel-Aviv, organized by the "Campus" student organization.

7/9 - A new Israeli film, "Beyond The Walls" won the International Critic Award at the International Film Festival of Venice. The film describes life in an Israeli prison. At the beginning of the film, the Jewish and Arab prisoners hate and mistrust each other, but they find common ground in a joint struggle against a sadistic warden. The film's political significance lies in giving the message of Jewish-Arab cooperation and understanding a medium in which it can reach broad sections of the Israeli population.

8/9 - Hundreds of Jews accepted the invitation of the Um-El-Fahm municipality to revisit the town under calmer conditions and participate in a Jewish-Arab dialogue.

12/9 - As the Labor Party Central Council convened in Tel-Aviv to ratify the coalition agreement with the Likud, several hundred members of "Peace Now" picketed outside to protest the rehabilitation of Ariel Sharon by Peres.

13/9 - President Haim Herzog made a state visit to Nazareth, thus breaking ten years of boycott imposed on the city by all official personalities since the Communist Party first won the municipal elections there.

15/9 - Members of "Yesh Gvul" held a vigil in Jerusalem, calling upon the new government to get out of Lebanon.

19/9 - Members of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon held a vigil in Haifa, to commemorate the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

- Members of the PLP and Mapam demonstrated in Tel-Aviv in solidarity with Raymonda Tawil (see separate article).

- Ten boys demonstrated against Kahane in the marketplace of Jerusalem. Kahane assaulted a 15-years old boy, slapped him and put a finger into his eye. The boy escaped and lodged a complaint against Kahane at the police, which said the case will be investigated.

21/9 - "Women Against Racism" held a meeting in Tel-Aviv, in which the connections between racism and sexism were pointed out.

22/9 - The PLP held a large rally in the Arab town of Tira, to commemorate the Sabra and Shatila massacres and protest the new massacre at Sukhmur village in South Lebanon.

29/9 - Israeli journalists demonstrated in East Jerusalem, outside Raymonda Tawil's office (see separate article).

- PLP co-chairman Uri Avnery visited the Red Cross offices in East Jerusalem, where the wives of prisoners in Nablus Prison were holding a sit-in strike. Their husbands in the prison were on hunger strike, in protest against overcrowding and the use of tear gas in the prison. The wives were also visited by delegations of The Communist Party, The Bir-Zeit Solidarity Committee, and others.

30/9 - In a press conference, the League for Civil and Human Rights protests conditions in the Nablus Prison, which drove the prisoners to open a hunger strike.

1/10 - The new minister of Police, Haim Bar-Lev, visited Nablus Prison and talked with the prisoners' leaders. He later admitted some of the prisoners' grievances were justified, but nevertheless condemned the strike as being "political". On the same day, Bar-Lev also forbade Kahane from entering the Arab town of Taibeh, where he intended to repeat the Um-El-Fahm events.

1/10 - All the Arab municipalities in Israel held a strike, to protest insufficient allocation of resources by the government.

2/10 - Several members of The Bir-Zeit Solidarity Committee picketed Nablus Prison.

4/10 - A quick mobilisation by peace organizations and parties in Tel-Aviv foiled an attempt by Kahane and his followers to disrupt the screening of "Beyond The Walls" (see September 7th). Kahane had to content himself with shouting racist slogans at the peace demonstrators who greatly outnumbered his men. Despite a heavy police cordon, the two groups came to blows several times. One of Kahane's men and one demonstrator were arrested.

- The prisoners in Nablus Prison stopped their strike, after Minister Bar-Lev agreed to some of their demands.



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The PLP in the Knesset

On July 23ed, 1984, Muhamad Miari and Matti Peled of the Jewish-Arab Progressive List for Peace (PLP) were elected to the Knesset.

The first task of the PLP was to break the "linkage" made between itself and Kahane's fascist "Kach" party. Various politicians (including some supposed "doves") tried to discredit the PLP by portraying it and Kahane as "the extremists on both sides." Ironically, Kahane himself helped to break the linkage, by provocative statements and violent deeds, for which there was, of course, no parallel in the PLP's conduct. The "linkage" was decisively broken by two events in the beginning of August. In the first one, President Haim Herzog broke precedent and refused to invite Kahane for consultations on the formation of a new government, the first such case in Israeli history. (Traditionally, all Knesset factions are invited to these consultations). Herzog did invite a PLP delegation, despite some right-wing pressure, and made it clear he sees no room for comparison. The second event was when senior executives of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority decided to limit coverage of Kahane to "hot news" only, and refrain from interviewing him. An attempt was made to apply the same rules to the PLP, but the Broadcasting Authority quickly backtracked when the PLP threatened to appeal to the Supreme Court.

After passing this initial hurdle, the PLP found itself thrust into one of the most confused political situations in Israeli history. With the two big parties evenly matched, every Knesset seat was important — including the PLP's two. Under these uncertain conditions, the PLP had to walk a very delicate tightrope. Of the three governments theoretically possible — a Likud government, a Likud — Labor coalition ("National Unity") and a Labor government — the last was the least evil; but, considering the Labor Party's program and character, nothing more than a "least evil". The PLP, thus, declared its complete opposition to a Likud government, or to a Likud-Labor coalition, and its willingness to negotiate with the Labor Party on voting for a Labor government without joining it (see document), at the same time making it clear that the PLP is no satellite of Labor, and will negotiate as a free agent and demand an adequate political price for its support.

By their position, the two PLP M. K.'s took an essential part in forming a 60-member anti-Likud block, which made it impossible for the Likud to obtain a majority in the 120-member Knesset, thus eliminating the worst possibility — that of a new Likud government. Though the possibility of a Labor government, dependant on the PLP votes, did not materialise either, the very fact that it was seriously considered, both in the Labor Party and in public opinion, marks the beginning of an important change in the status of the Arab citizens in Israeli politics. Since David Ben-Gurion's time, one of the axioms of Israeli politics was that the Arab voters

must never have a decisive voice, and a government must never depend on them for its majority. This racist principle was applied not only to the Communist Party (most of whose voters are Arabs) but even to Labor's own Arab satellites, who were quite meek and servile. Now, for the first time, this ceased to be an axiom accepted by all establishment politicians, and became the center of a hot controversy, directly tied in with the anti-racism controversy aroused by Kahane's actions. This might have enormous consequences for the future.

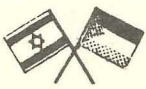
The PLP had no trouble at all in deciding to vote against the so-called "National Unity Government". Their opposition to it is complete. But the PLP did face a difficult dilemma in another important vote, in which the speaker of the Knesset was elected. The Likud candidate for this post, Meir Cohen-Avidov, is one of worst racists in the Knesset, second perhaps only to Kahane himself. Avidov became notorious after advocating the death penalty for Arab murderers (not, of course, for Jewish ones) and declaring his wish to personally "tear out the guts and gouge the eyes" of such "Arab murderers". Obviously, Cohen-Avidov's election had to be prevented. Unfortunately the Labor candidate Shlomo Hillel, though not such an outright racist, had a notoriety of his own: on the Day of the Land, March 30th, 1976, when Israeli security forces shot down and killed six Arab demonstrators, Hillel was the minister of Police in the Labor government. Though Hillel later tried to disclaim responsibility for these events, the PLP hesitated to vote for him. It did so only after getting the Labor Party's signature on an official agreement, in which Labor undertook to grant Um-El-Fahm the status of a city, (see previous article) and to consider favourably the setting up of an Arab university in Israel. *

In the following months, the PLP will continue to stand in steadfast opposition to the Likud-Labor government, to struggle for Israeli-Palestinian peace and to show how vital such a peace is for the solution of all of Israel's problems.

Mischief or bewilderment?

The Progressive List For Peace (PLP) seems to be puzzling many observers abroad, especially in the U.S. Its message of peace and equality evidently fails to register in certain circles. The fact that it drew a considerable number of Arab voters away from Labor and the National Religious Party (NRP),** is frequently seen as an ominous manifestation of a drift towards extreme Arab nationalism. Thus, a false equation is worked out, whereby Kahane's fascism is seen as "Jewish Extremism" balancing the PLP's supposed "Arab Extremism". This is how The New Republic sees the results of Israel's latest elections (August 13th and 20th, 1984) and its editor, Morton Kandracke, repeats the same nonsense in an article in the Washington Times (July 10th.)

* In 1982, a group of Arabs who intended to found an Arab university in Nazareth were denied permission to do so.



It must, however, be admitted that such mischievous misinterpretation of the PLP's appearance on the Israeli political scene is aided and abetted by "analyses" mailed from Israel by some of those who would normally be thought of as natural allies of the PLP. Thus, Amnon Rubinstein of "Shinuy" refers to the PLP as "extremist and radical" (The New York Times, July 21st.) and Shulamit Aloni hysterically declares that Matti Peled (M. K. for the PLP) is "as bad as Gush Emunim" (The Jerusalem Post, July 22ed.)

Perhaps, these two examples can be explained by the fears of leaders of two parties, whose advocacy of half-measures is constantly questioned by the PLP's clear platform, advocating equality for the Arabs inside Israel and full recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign state alongside Israel. But, what seems inexplicable is H'aaretz editor Gershon Shoken's description of the PLP as a new Arab Nationalist list represented by two M. K.'s, thus implying that Matti Peled is an Arab Nationalist (Foreign Affairs, Fall, 1984).

Such blindness among Israeli progressives may, perhaps, be explained as an indication of the shock sustained by them at the sight of the Arab citizens of Israel claiming their share of involvement in the affairs of the country. What seems to escape them altogether is the sincerity of Israeli Arabs, who, together with their Jewish compatriots, advocate the following goals:

- 1) Mutual recognition of the right of both peoples – the Jewish people in Israel and the Arab Palestinian people – to self-determination.
- 2) Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since June 1967 to be effected as a result of a negotiated peace between the government of Israel and the PLO, representing all the Palestinians living outside Israel.
- 3) The rights of all Israeli citizens to be guaranteed by a democratic constitution (From the PLP's 1984 elections platform).

The 12 points

The following document was presented by a PLP delegation to President Haim Herzog, outlining the PLP position on the formation of a new government:

- 1) We will not participate in any government that will not accept the principles of our minimum program, on peace and equality in Israel.
- 2) We will oppose a Likud-led government, or a so-called "National Unity Government."
- 3) It is not our purpose to bring the Labor Party to power. We have a long score to settle with

••The NRP controls the ministry of the interior, which has vast administrative powers inherited from British colonialism. Using these powers as an instrument of coercion and patronage, the NRP – a Jewish religious-nationalist party – managed, in the past, to obtain many Arab votes. The creation of the PLP had shaken the NRP's hold, which is one of the best justifications for the PLP's existence.

Labor, which was responsible for policies of discrimination and oppression, for confiscation of Arab lands, for building settlements in the occupied territories and for the "Land Day" affair. *

4) However, if the president will entrust the task of forming a government to the representative of the Labor Party, we will be willing to negotiate with that representative about our voting for a minority government in which the Jewish and Arab progressive forces will participate, and which will exclude the racist forces who support occupation and annexation. Our support will be given on the basis of the following 12 points, to be included in the government's official program:

A) The government will support the U. N. Secretary General's proposal to convene an international peace conference for solving the Palestinian problem, with the participation of all concerned parties, including Israel and the PLO. Israel will express its willingness to withdraw from the occupied territories.

B) The government will order the immediate withdrawal from Lebanon.

C) The government will stop settlement in the occupied territories.

D) The government will appoint a special minister for peace. .

E) The government will act firmly to eradicate the social and communal gaps, and to promote Oriental Jewish culture in education and in the state controlled media. * *

F) The government will abolish the emergency regulations, and stop the confiscation of Arab lands.

G) The government will initiate an anti-racism law.

H) The government will take real steps to further the equality of women.

I) The government will allocate resources equally to Jewish and to Arab municipal councils.

J) The government will insure equality in welfare payments, without difference of religion or national identity. * * *

K) The government will settle the Negev beduins in agricultural settlements, and abolish the "Green Patrol". * * * *

* The killing of six Arab demonstrators by security forces on March 30th, 1976.

* * The gap between rich and poor in Israeli society is greatly – though not completely – identical with the gap between European ("Ashkenazi") and Oriental ("Sephardi") Jews. The Orientals claim that their culture is being discriminated against in many ways, for example that the songs of popular Oriental singers are being boycotted by Ashkenazi disk-jockeys, on the Israeli radio.

* * * Present laws make eligibility to part of the welfare payments dependant on service in the army, thus discriminating against Arabs.

* * * * The present government policy is to settle the beduins in towns which are, actually, reserves of cheap labor for Jewish employers. The "Green Patrol" is a special anti-Beduin police unit, after using brutal methods. Agricultural settlement is a demand raised by the Beduins themselves.



L) The government will ensure equal recognition of Hebrew and Arabic as the two official languages of Israel.

5) It is our opinion that such a government can be formed in the 11th Knesset.

These conditions were presented to President Herzog by the PLP delegation, consisting of M.K. Muhammed Miari, Uri Avneri, Rev. Riach Abu-Al-Asal and Haim Hanegbi. (M.K. Matti Peled was abroad at the time). The President received the delegation with utmost cordiality.

ICIPP solidarity with Nicaragua

At the end of April 1984, Yael Lotan, member of ICIPP executive, attended an international conference held in Managua, Nicaragua, to protest the CIA-backed attempts to overthrow the Sandinist government of Nicaragua. Yael Lotan met with various Sandinist officials, as well as with members of the other delegations to the conference.

This act of solidarity is of particular significance to us, as an Israeli organization, because of the role which the Israeli government is playing in Central America, and in Nicaragua in particular, selling arms to the anti-Sandinist mercenaries, as well as to the right-wing dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Just as Israel's present government feels a natural kinship with oppressors everywhere, so would The Other Israel, for whose creation we struggle, be the natural ally of liberation movements the world over.

Our friends abroad

We got some good news from our American sister organization, the AICIPP (America - Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace). The American Internal Revenue Service ruled favourably on their application for tax exempt status under section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to AICIPP are now officially tax deductible. The AICIPP are distributing The Other Israel on the North American continent. To enjoy the tax-exempt status, subscribers should write to them. (Address in box, on page 11). North American subscribers will also receive the AICIPP's own newsletter, Voices For Peace.

Three AICIPP members, Mary Appelman, Lisa Leslie and Brad Roth, attended the UN-sponsored NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) Symposium on Palestine, held in New York in June.

Our French friends, from the "Comite Palestine et Israel Vivront" and several other organizations, have also been active. Their protest has been instrumental in foiling the attempt to outlaw the PLP in June, and the attempt to close Raymonda Tawil's magazine in September. The comite is distributing The Other Israel in France, Britain and Italy. (see address in box, on page 11).

Members of the Israeli, American and French organizations all participated in the September, conference of NGO's at Geneva. They used the occasion to compare notes and to create and extend contacts with a wide variety of other organizations.

Recently, we have made contact with a Canadian organization, the "Committee for Peace in The Middle East", which is mobilising Canadian public opinion for Israeli-Palestinian peace. Canadian readers are invited to contact:

R. Ryba
5290, Victoria Ave., apt. 3
Montreal, Que. H3w 2p1
Canada

We would be glad to contact and publish the addresses of further organizations who share our dream of Israeli-Palestinian peace and wish to help realise it. Short accounts of such organizations' activities will also be welcome.

A new attack on Raymonda Tawil

Mrs. Raymonda Tawil of Ramallah is well known, both in the occupied territories and in Israel, as well as internationally. Her unceasing struggle against occupation had, many times, landed her in trouble with the Israeli military authorities, and led to several arrests and house arrests. Nor were the authorities pleased by her involvement in Israeli-Palestinian dialogues, and her outspoken support for the two-state solution and for Issam Sartawi's peace efforts - extremist Palestinians provide a much better excuse for continued occupation and settlement.

On September 17th, 1984, a new attack was launched, directed, this time, against the East Jerusalem Palestine Press Services (PPS), and the Al-Awdah magazine, both owned by Raymonda Tawil in partnership with Mr. Ibrahim Kara'een. Two identically-worded letters were delivered: one, signed by the Commissioner of Jerusalem, threatened to cancel Al-Awdah's licence * ; the other, signed by the military attorney-general of the central district, made a similar threat to close the PPS. Both cited as their reason supposed information that the PPS and Al-Awdah are "guided and financed by Al-Fatah organization" and are "used for serving the illegal goals of this organization." (As usual in such cases, the accused were not allowed to see the "evidence" brought against them.) The completely identical language used by two different authorities - a military and a civilian one (the commissioner is subordinate to the Interior ministry) - points out to the real hidden originators of the whole move, the security services. The timing is significant - a few days after the new government entered office, and before the new ministers had time to formulate any policy. Clearly, the security services hoped to use the confusion to secure long sought-for objective, as well as to entangle both Mr. Rabin (the military attorney's ultimate boss) and Mr. Peres (who is Acting Interior Minister, and thus the commissioner's boss) in a tough, anti-Palestinian step on their first day in office.



The response of Israeli and world public opinion was prompt. On September 19th, a demonstration took place in Tel-Aviv, organized by the PLP, in which members of Mapam also took part. While the Israeli Association of Journalists kept its shameful record of complete silence (see issues No. 3, P. 11; No. 8, P. 9), a delegation of progressive Israeli journalists * visited Al-Awdah's offices and afterwards demonstrated in East Jerusalem's main street. Strong protests were voiced from outside Israel, as well. In particular, many protests came from France. The "Comite Palestine et Israel Vivront", the "Comite de l'appel des Juifs contre La Guerre au Liban" and thirteen other French organizations sent a telegram of protest to Shimon Peres. Another telegram was sent by the French Socialist Party. (It should be noted that Mr. Peres, who greatly values his party's membership in The Socialist International, is particularly susceptible to pressures by Socialist and Social-Democratic parties).

On September 30th, a day before Mrs. Tawil was due to meet the Jerusalem Commissioner and the military attorney and present her case, the prime minister's office unofficially announced Peres' intention to "reconsider" the whole affair. The meeting with the two officials was not, however, canceled. In it, Amnon Zichroni, acting as the PPS' and Al-Awdah's lawyer, presented his case, using both legal and political arguments. M. K. Matti Peled was also present. The authorities' representatives were noncommittal, giving no definite answer.

While it is obvious that the pressure, inside and outside Israel, had affected Peres' position, the threat had not yet been officially removed. Until it is, the friends of Israeli-Palestinian peace and of Raymonda Tawil should remain vigilant.

Who is a Zionist?

The word "Zionism" is an emotionally loaded one for both Israelis and Palestinians. In Israel, one commonly hears the word "Zionism" used as a synonym, not only for "Patriotism," but for "Idealism" or "Altruism" as well. For example, helping the elderly may be referred to as an "act of true Zionism." For most Palestinians, on the other hand, Zionism is Evil Incarnate, the ideology in whose name they were deprived of their land and freedom. For the ICIPP, a Zionist organization seeking a dialogue with nationalist Palestinians, this duality creates special problems.

Some light may be shed on this problem by the following exchange between Amnon Zichroni, a member of the ICIPP, Felicia Langer, a member of Rakah - The Israeli Communist Party (both of whom are well-known Israeli lawyers), and Jamal

** Both the commissioner himself and his power to grant and cancel, at his discretion, the licences of newspapers, are relics of British colonialism retained by successive Israeli governments.*

Surani, a member of the PLO executive committee and its de facto "Minister of Justice." The exchange took place in Tokyo on March 21, 1983, where these three, together with many others, testified before the International People's Tribunal on the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon (IPTIL).

The text is reprinted from IPTIL's official record, recently published in Tokyo. * The comments are by IPTIL.

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One of the most moving moments of the tribunal came during the press conference organized to announce the judgment on March 21. In a tense atmosphere created by what appeared to be a clash of views concerning Zionism, the following exchange took place:

Jamal Surani: We are human beings. We cannot continue the savage treatment of innocent (Palestinian and Arab) people who never harmed a single Jew. When the Jews were discriminated against in Europe, they always found asylum in Palestine and the rest of the Arab world. The problem began with the Zionist movement. We can therefore distinguish between Zionism and Jewry.

Amnon Zichroni: Palestinians must understand that the way to peace, or the right way to peace, the only chance for peace, is to find a way to make peace with Israel as a Zionist country! I have many criticisms of the Zionist movement, but Israel is a Zionist state. Of course, the peace forces are not strong enough. But we must convince the Israelis, our Zionists, that peace is the only way for them to survive. I hope we will succeed.

Felicia Langer: We are fighting for peace together with Mr. Zichroni. He defends Palestinians and others, and on that point, we have no differences. But I don't agree with Mr. Zichroni's description of the ideological aspect of the state of Israel. I'm not a Zionist, yet I live in the state of Israel. The self-determination of the Jewish people in Israel is not synonymous with Zionism in my opinion. Israeli patriotism is not Zionism. There are many thousands of Israelis who are not Zionists and who have a very bad opinion of Zionism . . .

Surani: I don't think there are any real differences between me and Mr. Zichroni. When we (Palestinians) say we are against Zionism, we mean we are against aggression, racism, expansionism, imperialism, U.S. imperialism, and intervention in our homeland. I believe Mr. Zichroni is against all of these, too. It doesn't make any difference whether he calls himself a Zionist (or anything else). Second, if Mr. Zichroni is for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and statehood, then I don't care what Zionism means to him, or to me . . .

Following this exchange, the tension in the room subsided. Was it a carefully rehearsed piece of political theater? Perhaps so. But those of us present felt the electricity in the air. Because it touched one of the most crucial aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian problem, the repartee was revealing and seemed to hold out hope of a genuine dialogue between the two peoples.

We can assure our friends at IPTIL that this exchange was in no way prepared or rehearsed, and its significance is, therefore, all the greater.

** Readers interested in obtaining the full IPTIL record, in which two whole chapters are devoted to Amnon Zichroni's testimony, can write to:*

*The Editors,
International People's Tribunal on
the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon,
SANYUSHA,
19-23, Otowa 1-Chome, Bunkyo-ku,
Tokyo, Japan*