

# The Other Israel

Newsletter of the Israeli Council  
for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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## Israel and a PLO «yes» to 242?

As this newsletter goes to print, Egypt's President Hussni Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein are seriously pressuring the PLO to accept UN resolutions 242 and 338. While recognizing Israel but stipulating an Israeli withdrawal from Occupied Territories, the UN resolutions, adopted respectively in 1967 and 1973, ignore the national identity of the Palestinian people, referring to them solely as refugees. The PLO has therefore refused throughout the years to support these resolutions, a refusal which has been presented by the Israeli government and the US as one of the major arguments for denying the PLO a place in the political process.

In reality, Labor and Likud's disqualification of the PLO is inevitable, considering that both parties refuse to relinquish their grip on the Occupied Territories. This has been evident for years, but it is a position which the PLO's acceptance of the UN resolutions – difficult as it may be – would make glaringly and unequivocally clear. Moreover, Israel's public opinion, in the aftermath of the disastrous invasion of Lebanon and with the grim prospects that the current political deadlock may lead to yet another war (this time perhaps with Syria) is clearly becoming disenchanted with the burdens and dilemmas emanating from the occupation – a significant development when compared with previous years (See public opinion poll in this issue).

The background to this demoralization is the deepening economic crisis – Uncle Sam's dollars (3,5 billion a year) only ensure that the collapse of Israel's economy will not be total. But muddling through, in both the economic and political spheres, is taking its toll. Televised pictures of the elderly being evicted from government-subsidized old age homes because of lack of funds; portioning of much needed medicines in all of Israel's major hospitals because of lack of money to fill the stockpiles are recurring themes in the news media. A steep decline in the standard of living, unemployment reaching close to ten percent, faltering economic concerns

and a significant rise in emigration receive wide press coverage, along with reports that the vast majority of West Bank settlers live off funds provided by the government. One must add to all this the current headlines describing the rampant cases of land extortion practiced in the Occupied Territories (see this issue). It would seem that the occupation is perceived by ever-growing segments of Israeli Jewish society to be far from a "success story". In this public climate, acceptance by the PLO of the UN resolutions would, perhaps, not go unanswered. True, the Likud and Israel's extreme Right would reflexively ignore whatever political moves the PLO might undertake, but for Israel's Center and those large number of Israelis floating between the Center and the Right, such a move by the PLO would be a tremendous political challenge.



### ANTI-PEACE LAW

The "Anti-Peace" Law, already on the Knesset's weekly agenda for more than a month, may be brought to the floor at any moment for its second and final third reading.

Labor Party Doves, unhappy, with the initiative in the first place, but lacking the political courage to vote according to their consciences, had quit the floor at its first reading (see *Other Israel* No. 17).

However, since then, the Doves seem to be having second thoughts. Labor MK Professor (Law) David Libai, a highly respected attorney, has introduced a rider to the original proposal which, if adopted by the Knesset, could take the sting out of the law.

In the proposed wording, Israelis having contact with the PLO are threatened with 3 years imprisonment but MK Libai's rider stipulates that such contacts would be considered a criminal offence only if they "... encourage terror". This is a significant legal loophole since such an accusation



would be difficult to prove.

If Libai's rider is adopted by the Knesset, the situation, for all intents and purposes, returns to the status quo ante which disallows, by law, Israeli contacts with "terrorist organizations" unless a "plausible explanation" exists and no harm to the security of the state is intended or caused.

This provision, in force since the 1950's, has enabled members of the ICIPP, PLP and others to meet PLO officials and leaders without undue fears of criminal prosecution. And it is precisely this loophole that the Anti-Peace Law intends to eliminate. Mr. Libai's amendment is, therefore, raising hopes among many people in the Peace Movement; indeed it is on it's account, that the Law has not yet been brought to vote. Without the support of the Labor party, it cannot be adopted.

There is a possibility that the damaging publicity given to Israel abroad because of the Law, including a condemnation of it by Madam Marijke Van Hemeldonck, Belgian deputy to the European Parliament, and numerous protest letters sent to Prime Minister Peres, had an effect on the Labor party. One can only encourage more such protests. The battle is still goin on!

The Editor

## LAND EXTORTION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

**Prominent Likud political figures – Michael Dekel, Deputy Minister of Defence, to mention only one – are currently being investigated by the police and are implicated in practices of fraud, extortion and corruption, in regard to land transactions in the Occupied Territories. The affair is turning into a major political and economic scandal. It may compromise Israel's Right (especially the Likud) and even more important Israel's entire settlement project.**

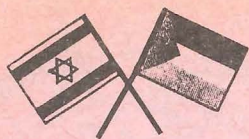
Official documents uncovered by the police reveal that during Dekel's tenure as Deputy Minister of Agriculture (heading the Ministry's Department of Settlement) in Begin's and the Shamir's governments (1981-1984), his assistants distributed among leading Israeli contractors "letters of intent" to the effect that the government approved the construction of settlements in certain regions in the Occupied Territories. This, it now turns out, the government had never sanctioned. On the basis of these "letters of intent" private Israeli construction firms began an unprecedented advertising campaign in the media (during the years 1981-1984) aimed at luring Israelis to buy land and build villas in the unpolluted air of "Yehuda" and "Shomron".

Thousands of Israelis responded to the tempting advertisements offering plush villas for a mere down payment of three thousand dollars, with promises that the government would cover the

balance of the cost. Bus tours chartered by Likud functionaries brought potential buyers to mountaintops and valleys in the Occupied Territories. Land was parcelled out on the spot. Law firms, many of them affiliated with the Likud (such as the Law firm of the now Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Roni Milo, a close protégé of Yitzhak Shamir) made enormous sums of money in commissions, attending to the legal details of the contracts between the buyers and contractors. The latter 'kicked back' some of their profits to the Likud party apparatus on the eve of the last elections in June 1984.

When after two years they had not yet received delivery of their goods, hundreds of Israeli buyers lost patience, demanded their money back, and complained to the police. It was out of these complaints that the Pandora's box of shady deals and fraud were publicly exposed. Violence was also used, but only against Palestinian peasants (*See, Land Extortion, Other Israel, No. 17*), legal owners of the lands, the forged titles of which Israeli contractors deviously acquired from Jewish and Arab land speculators.

Before actually reaching the hands of the purchasing public, the deals passed through four-five middlemen, each one making a profit, and almost all of them – including collaborationist Palestinian land speculators (Ahmed Udeh) – donating portions of their illgotten gains to the Likud. The truth of the matter is that segments of the Israeli public have only themselves to blame for ever considering living in the territories under a state of occupation. And it is only because that public is Israeli – and this point must be emphasised – that the whole affair has blown up to its current proportions. For years, Palestinian peasants have lodged official complaints with local military officials (many of whom have in the meantime changed occupations, becoming themselves land speculators) to the effect that their lands had been removed from their possession by means of fraud (counterfeit signatures) and violence. Assistant to the Attorney General, Yehudit Carp, published a report (1983) whose findings showed, among other aspects of the occupation, serious misdealings in the acquisition of land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Her report was shelved by the then Likud government. Police investigations of the peasants' complaints were blocked. In 1983, State Attorney officials criticized Michael Dekel's (the then Likud Deputy Minister of Agriculture) "letters of intent" which falsely claimed that the government favoured settlements on the contested regions. It is beyond doubt that the entire Likud government was well aware of the methods used in the great land grab, but these "methods" were in their eyes mere trifles, compared to the imperative of hastily settling as many Jews as possible in the Occupied Territories. "Creating facts on the ground" (settlements) and "arranging" the legal formalities later has, after all, been the underlying philosophy of Labor and Likud governments' settlement policy since the beginning



of the occupation. Whereas labor governments (1967-1977) had seized close to 30 percent of Palestinians lands, largely by means of state expropriations, the Likud (1977-1984), desiring to hasten the process, has allowed since 1979 private companies and individuals to participate in the land grab. Fraud, corruption and violence has accompanied the history of the land grab since 1967.

## KAHANE, LABOR, LIKUD AND THE POLARIZATION IN ISRAEL

MK Meir Kahane, recently proposed in the Knesset two bills modelled on the infamous Nazi Nuremberg Laws of 1935: prohibiting marriage and sexual relations between Jews and non Jews; and stripping Israel's Arab citizens (712,000) of all civil rights. Knesset speaker, Shlomo Hillel (identified with the Labor Party's right-wing), flatly refused to recognize the Nazi proposals as a legitimate subject for discussion and include them in the Knesset agenda. Kahane appealed to the Supreme Court, which ruled that the speaker had no jurisdiction in terms of Knesset regulations to block any bills, however repugnant they may be.

The Knesset House Committee, dominated by Labor and Likud, amended the regulations, thus allowing Mr. Hillel to shelve any proposals which he considered racist. Kahane returned to the Supreme Court claiming that the Knesset House Committee's amendment was illegal. At the time of writing (late December) we are still awaiting the High Court's decision.

Kahane has taken Labor and Likud's bi-partisan policies of refusing to recognize the elementary human and national rights of the Palestinians to their most extreme and logical conclusion. They reveal the abyss to which our society is heading-apartheid; mass expulsion of Palestinians and rabid racism. The only alternative road for Israel is to withdraw from the Occupied Territories and recognize Palestinian human and national rights. Kahane is deepening the polarization of Israeli society, a process which began with Sadat's visit in 1977, and was intensified during the Lebanon War. Racism is now clearly on the country's public agenda and can no longer be swept under the carpet.

Labor party youth movements spearheading demonstrations against Kahane in the past months (which we have described in "The Chronicles of the Peace Struggle") is an encouraging sign. There are now (late December) more than twenty groups, organizations and parties active in the campaign against Kahane. An umbrella organization called "Response" formed in September (see *Other Israel No. 18*) includes representatives from the entire political spectrum (also right-wing Likud) to coordinate activities against Kahane.

Israel's largest right-wing bloc, the Likud is split regarding the tactics to be adopted against Kahane. Recent public opinion polls show that Kahane's gains in popularity are entirely at the expense of the Likud. To offset mass desertions of Likud's rank and file several Likud leaders, including Ariel Sharon, have intensified their extremist rhetoric. However, others, such as David Levy, Minister of Housing and Construction, who along with Sharon is challenging Yitzhak Shamir for the leadership of the party, has on a number of occasions spoken out against Kahane's movement. Labor Prime Minister Peres and President Haim Herzog (Labor) have also declared Kahanism to be a danger to Israeli society. On no occasion, however - and this point must be emphasised - do any of Labor-Likud leaders explicitly or implicitly make any critique or even mention the circumstances which allowed Kahanism to take root in the first place, namely the occupation. Labor and Likud traditional policies aimed at pushing the Palestinians from their lands (by settlements) and erasing their national identity, inevitably created the conditions for racism. Kahanism is not a 'fluke' nor an aberration, but a consistent expression of those policies.

However, with Kahane seriously damaging Israel's image abroad, especially in the US, Labor and Likud leaders have jumped on the anti-Kahane bandwagon. Both parties have joined forces in curbing his activities. The Election Committee dominated by Labor-Likud is now empowered by law to disqualify any party which advocates racist incitement from participating in elections. To balance the move against Kahane, the law also stipulates that no party which does not recognize Israel as the "State of the Jewish people" (throughout the world) may participate in general elections. The law "forgot" to mention that more than 700,000 non-Jewish (Arab) citizens live in Israel. They understandably demand a status of equality with the country's Jewish population, not to mention the Jewish communities abroad. Efforts by the Progressive List for Peace to amend the law and include in its provisions some reference to the fact that Israel belongs also to its significant Palestinian minority, was rejected by Labor and Likud. In fact the law, instead of militating against Kahane and racism undermines, the civil and political rights of Israel's entire Arab community. More immediately, the law could cause the Progressive List for Peace, which represents a major part of the Arab citizens, grave difficulties in participating in the next elections. Yet, while Labor and Likud are busy balancing every move against Kahane with ever harsher attacks against the Palestinians inside and outside Israel, and against the PLP (Suspension of PLP's MK Mohammed Mi'ari's parliamentary immunities, See *Other Israel No. 18*) the Labor Youth Movement demonstrations against Kahane in the streets are radicalizing more and more Israelis, and especially those on the periphery of the Labor Party.

The moral and political questions which Kahanism, and for that matter, Israel's entire



political Right, are raising, are forcing larger segments of public opinion to deal with the Palestinian question. Although Labor and certainly Likud leaders never link the growing racism in the country with the suppression of the Palestinians, increasing number of Israelis are beginning to think otherwise.

## PUBLIC OPINION POLL

According to a national public opinion poll carried out by the Pori Institute for the Hebrew newspaper Ha'aretz (Nov. 8) 30 percent of the Israeli public supports the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, 40,8 percent of all those who participated in the poll think that, in principle, the Palestinians have the right to a state of their own. The percentage of those who think the Palestinians have the right to a state is twice as great among those who vote for Labour (52 percent) as among those who vote for Likud (25 percent).

As to the location of the independent Palestinian state, 30 percent accept its establishment in the West Bank and Gaza, 'on the condition that the Palestinians recognize Israel and halt all hostile actions.' 61 percent oppose its establishment in the West Bank and Gaza even under this condition.

The poll was based on interviews with 1200 men and women, in a representative sample drawn from all over the country.

# Chronicles

## OF THE PEACE STRUGGLE

27/10 - Thousands of postcards calling for a speedup of legislation against racism were mailed to Knesset speaker Shlomo Hillel (Labor). Signatures to postcards were collected in Israel's municipal centers (Tel-Aviv, Natania, and Hedera) by members of "Mapam" which is sponsoring the campaign.

3/11 - The Writers' Association in Israel has joined the educational campaign against racism, and has called on all writers in Israel to address meetings of students and teachers regarding the dangers inherent in racism. About thirty of the country's leading writers have so far agreed to take part in the campaign.

6/11 - Members of the "Youth Guard" movement, affiliated to Mapam, launched a wide-scale campaign among the country's youth to sign a petition saying: "No to Civil War; Yes to Democracy; No to the Occupation; Yes to Peace".

The campaign came in the wake of the settlers

movement's (Gush Emunim) comments that any government relinquishing territories would be considered illegal and cause a civil war.

14/11 - Sponsored by the organization "Buds of Peace", Arab and Jewish national league professional soccer players are organizing meetings between Arab and Jewish teenage soccer players and fans.

- About 1,500 demonstrators wearing black masks demonstrated against Apartheid in front of the South African embassy in Tel-Aviv. "Israelis Against Apartheid", "Down with Racism", "Release Nelson Mandela" were some of the slogans that were raised in the demonstration.

An organization "Israelis Against Apartheid", comprising representatives from the major left of center parties and groups in the country, sponsored the event.

21/11 - Shlomo Kirat, a member of Israel's national soccer team, made extreme racist remarks, accusing Rif'at Turk and Zahi Armeli, the two Arab players on the team, of being responsible for the team's failure in the international soccer matches. Strong protests, from Knesset members and public figures followed. Eighty soccer players signed a letter of solidarity addressed to Zahi Armeli. The The Israeli Soccer Association removed Kirat from the national soccer team, declaring his racist views to be incompatible with membership in it.

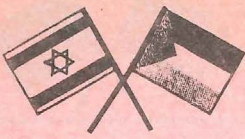
22/11 - About 30 members of "Down with the Occupation" visited Dheisheh Refugee Camp (West Bank) and met with the family of Hasan Abd-el-Jawad, a Palestinian activist under threat of expulsion by the military government.

24/11 - Twenty well known Israeli jurists called on the Knesset to refrain from passing the law prohibiting contacts with PLO officials.

26/11 - Zaffer el-Massri, head of Nablus' (West Bank) Chamber of Commerce was appointed to head the city hitherto administered (since 1982) by Israeli military appointees. In response to the move, PLP MK's Mohammed Mi'ari and Matti Peled declared: "... transferring the management of the city from the hands of the military officials to the inhabitants is in itself a positive step and it should be taken in the other cities as well (such as Ramallah, Hebron, El-Bireh).

However, both MK's warn that the appointment of el-Massri may be an attempt to create an alternative to the PLO leadership, a move which, if it is the case, is doomed to fail. The PLP MK's also note that the appointment of el-Massri by the military authorities cannot be a substitute for democratic elections in which the inhabitants, of their own free will, choose their mayor.

27/11 - The Military court martial of reserve soldier Yona (Anatol) Yablonko, a physicist, began today. Mr. Yablonko, already jailed three times for refusing to do reserve duty in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, now faces a fourth prison sentence. The events leading to Mr. Yablonko's current court martial were published by his mother Sara Yablonko in one of Israel's newspapers.



On August 16, 1984, more than a year ago, Yona was called up for reserve duty. He and his unit were ordered to the Golan Heights. Yona refused and asked to speak with his commanding officer, which the latter refused. Unlike previous occasions, Yona was not immediately court martialed or detained. The following day he returned to his unit's military liaison officer in Jerusalem in order to bring the case to some sort of conclusion. However, once again none of the military personnel were prepared to discuss the matter with him, except for a laconic statement to the effect that as long as he is absent from his unit in the Golan Heights, he is considered a deserter. Daily, and for more than a week, Yona either went to or called his unit's military liaison officer. He was told that he would be notified of any new developments. Yona heard no more, until his arrest a year later (Nov. 8, 1985). Yona is a conscientious objector, and the army charges him with desertion.

28/11 – The Board of Censors rejected the Haifa theater's appeal to reconsider the ban on the play "Ephraim returns Home" (*See chronicle, 18/10*). In its ruling, the censorship committee disregarded the Attorney General's opinion that a decision to ban the play would be difficult to defend in court. The religious parties and Likud in Haifa's municipal council have threatened to cut subsidies to Haifa's theatre if its directors take the case to the Supreme Court. Yitzhak Laor, the author of the controversial play, announced that he would appeal to the Supreme Court even without the support of the theatre.

1/12 – Petach Tikva (city, twenty minute drive from Tel-Aviv) municipal spokesman announced that Kahane sympathisers would be barred from entering the municipality building's auditorium. Kahane bullies have for the past three weeks created serious disturbances during the traditional weekend public interview shows held in the building. During an interview with Petach Tikva mayor. Dov Tabori (Labor), held before a packed house, a group of Kahanist teenagers yelled at the mayor "Nazi". "fascist". Stepping off the platform, the mayor walked up to the bullies and slapped one of them in the face. A week later, and in the same premises, another group of Kahanists including the youngster that was slapped a week earlier, began heckling Knesset member Mordechai Wirshubski (Shinui, three MK's, aligned with Labor) during the live talk show.

2/12 – The family of Yoav Spiegel – killed in the Lebanon War – has returned to Prime Minister Peres the "Certificate of Esteem and Respect", given them (and other families) after the death of their son. In an accompanying letter, the Spiegels declare that the Prime Minister's refusal to appoint a board of inquiry into the Lebanon War and the cynical designation of the war "Operation for the Peace of Galilee", seriously mars the memory of their loved one.

3/12 – "Yesh Gvul" (There is a limit, There is a border), whose members include resisters to the Lebanon War (Adam Keller, who is now in France, is

one of the more than one hundred Israelis who refused to serve in the war) convened a press conference on the occasion of the publication of the book "The Limits of Obedience", ED. Ishaï and Dina Menuchin, by Yesh Gvul and Siman Kri'a Book, Israel, 1985 (Hebrew). The book includes articles written by – among others – Yishayahu Lebovitz, Noam Chomsky, Assa Kasher, Andre Krevin, Meir Pail and others.

Speakers at the press conference to promote the book included Professor Yishayahu Lebovitz, Dr. Yehuda Meltzer, Rabbi Yirmi Milgram and Sara Yablonko. The latter's son Yona, a conscientious objector charged with desertion (*See Chronicle 27/11*), was imprisoned for three months after a court martial. "The dividing line", said Professor Lebovitz, "passes between those who demand total obedience to the state and its institutions and those who say there is a limit".

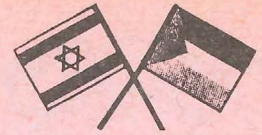
5/12 – "Palestinian Center for Non-Violence", located in occupied East Jerusalem, distributed a flier calling on the inhabitants of the Occupied Territories to boycott Israeli products at least once a week or once a month. Aud Mubark founded the Center two years ago. Mohatma Ghandi's non-violent resistance is, in Mr. Mubark's opinion, the means of achieving Palestinian rights. His article written for the Palestinian daily Al-Fajar, calling for the boycott, was censored by the military authorities.

12/12 – More than 250 people participated in a public discussion on the topic "Is Civil War Possible in Israel". Held in Tel-Aviv, the event was sponsored by the PLP. Sitting on the panel were: Professor Yishayahu Lebovitz, Mr. Uri Avnery, Co-Chairman of the PLP Executive, MK Shulamit Aloni (Citizens Rights Movement), MK Mohammed Wattad (Mapam), and General (Res.) Meir Pail (historian).

All of the speakers agreed that a state of eighteen years of occupation, whereby 1,500,000 million Palestinians are living beyond the rule of law, is steadily undermining the social and legal fabric of Israeli society.

Shulamit Aloni declared that a significant element in Israel's Right, especially the Settlers' Movement (Gush-Emunim), would take up arms against any government prepared to give back even some of the territories.

Uri Avnery stated that the Peace Movement must concentrate all its efforts in reaching Oriental Jews – the most socially and economically deprived elements within Israel's Jewish population – and drawing them to its camp. The bulk of Oriental Jews, who constitute a majority in the country, have so far supported right-wing positions on the Palestinian question, and it is they, according to Mr. Avnery, who will largely decide whether Israel will eventually be prepared to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians. The Peace Movement's failure on this point, along with America's failure to lean on Israel, will drain the strength of the Opposition, thus ensuring hegemony of the Right. However, with American backing, as was the case when Israel withdrew from Sinai, any Israeli government



determined to reach a settlement with the Palestinians could stifle, says Uri Avnery, rebellious right-wing elements opposed to even the most minimum withdrawal from the Occupied Territories.

Professor Yishayahu Lebovitz, restated what he has been saying for years: continuing the occupation will inevitably lead Israel to a life and death showdown between it, the Palestinians and the entire Arab world. Commenting on Yona Yablonko's objections to serving in the Occupied Territories (*see chronicle, 27/11*), Professor Lebovitz declared that an organized group of no more than 200 Israelis, refusing to do likewise, would be a political bombshell, seriously undermining Israel's ability to hold on to the territories.

Mohammed Wattad declared that the problem facing the Peace Movement is not the Right but Israel's Center who, like the Right, reject a complete withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Unlike Meir Pail, who believes that civil war in the country is possible, Mr. Wattad declared that the gulf between the Right and Center is not great enough, at least for the time being, to indicate that the country is heading in such a direction.

15/12 - Approximately 2000 members of "Response" demonstrated against Kahane's rally in Ber-Sheva (southern Israel). Significantly outnumbering his twenty supporters, the demonstrators blew whistles and made so much noise that racist Kahane was unable to speak or be heard. Dejected, he left shortly afterwards, accompanied by a large police force for protection.

- Because of bankruptcy, Arab village and municipal councils in Israel went on strike indefinitely. With no money to pay council employees, water bills and teachers' wages, social services in the Arab centers have come to a complete standstill. Village and town heads are threatening collective resignation, unless the Ministry of Interior channels funds. For years receiving a fraction of the funds allocated to Jewish local governments, Israel's Arabs demand equality.

17/12 - Yitzhak Laor's play, "Ephraim returns Home", was read out at a public gathering at the University of Tel-Aviv in protest against the censorship of the play. Well-known actors, writers and intellectuals participated in the protest reading (Playwrite Hanoch Levin, Professor of Philosophy Assa Kasher, Actress Hana Maron, Tel-Aviv theater Department head Dr. Avi Oz, and many others).

- Prime Minister Peres rejected a private family's demand for a national inquiry into the Lebanon War (*see Chronicle, 2/12*). The Spiegels, whose son was killed in the war, responded to the Prime Minister's letter by saying that they "we will continue to campaign for the inquiry and for the prosecution of all those responsible for the war".

20/12 - Approximately 50 members of "Down with the Occupation" held a demonstration against the Occupation in central Tel-Aviv. On a large stand erected by the group was an eye-catching placard which read:

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22/12 - The University of Jerusalem's Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace sponsored a symposium on the topic "Development in Arab Society in Israel". Participating in the event, among others, were some of Israel's leading Arab and Jewish sociologists and Education experts: Dr. Sami Mari, Education Department, University of Haifa; Aziz Hidar, researcher at the Truman Institute and Professor Henry Rosenfeld, Sociology Department, University of Haifa.

23/12 - The University of Jerusalem's Institute for Education to Co-Existence sponsored a symposium "Fanaticism or Tolerance". President Haim Herzog was the opening speaker. Other participants included Professor Shlomo Avinery, Department of Political Science, University of Jerusalem, Dr. Shlomo Elbaz, Department of French Literature, University of Jerusalem and Advocate Mohammed Massarwa, head of Kfar Karra village (center of Israel).

## FROM ROME TO THE KNESSET

The PLP's Executive Co-Chairman, Uri Avnery and Leah Tzemel - attorney well known for representing Palestinian detainees in the Occupied Territories - were invited by the Italian League for the Rights and the Liberation of Peoples to participate, in Rome in an international conference dedicated to the "Rights, of Peoples and their Liberations". South Africans, Filipinos, Palestinians (PLO), Kurds from Iraq, members of Solidarity from Poland, as well as representatives from liberation movements in South America and other continents took part in the conference. Mr. Avnery and Ms. Tzemel were representing all those of the Other Israel who, along with their opposition to the suppression of Palestinian rights, are in solidarity with all the oppressed peoples of the world, many of them suppressed with the help of arms supplied by the Israeli government (South Africa, Chile, Philippines etc. . .).

Two campaigns launched by the PLP have been vindicated. One was the granting of municipal status to Umm-el Fahem, an Arab town numbering 25,000 inhabitants, which the authorities have, until now



persisted in regarding as a "village". A promise to grant this status to Umm-el Fahem was given by the Labor party in exchange for the PLP's support of the Labor candidate to the Knesset speakership (see, No. 10, p. 6),

Another PLP success concerns the entry of Arab farmers, for the first time, into the "Agricultural Center", the main instrument of all agricultural activities of the Histadrut (General Federation of Labour). This giant body, which has virtual control over almost all aspects of Israeli agriculture, was until now, reserved for Jewish farmers alone. Arabs were admitted only after a public and judicial campaign waged by the PLP (see, No. 15, p. 6).

Following the banning of Yitzhak Laor's play, "Ephraim returns to the Army", MK's Mi'ari and Peled introduced a private members' bill to abolish censorship of plays and films in Israel.

MK's Mohammed Mi'ari and Matti Peled's recent proposal in the Knesset, to amend the law regulating the Government Bureau of Statistics, was not adopted. Mi'ari and Peled took issue with the Bureau's policy of using the term "non-Jews", when reference is made to Israel's Arab community. For example, the Bureau's Statistical Yearbook for 1985 (as all previous ones), reveals that 4,148,500 people live in Israel, among them 3,430,000 Jews and 712,500 "non-Jews". In another section of the 1985 Yearbook we find that Israel has 37 cities - 24 of them are referred to as "established" and 11 are described as "new". However, 24 and 11 add up to only 35!

Instead of writing directly that two Arab cities exist in Israel (the Yearbook was published before Umm-el Fahem's change in status), the yearbook demands of the reader to do simple arithmetic. And, even after doing so, s/he has to be acquainted with Israel in order to know that the "non-Jewish" population, as well as the "non-Jewish" cities, are in fact, Arab. It is this anomaly, this refusal or inability to provide direct information, expressing a deep ideological and political "blind-spot", which Mi'ari and Peled attempted, unfortunately without success, to correct.



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## ON OUR TENTH YEAR

The ICIPP was formed in December 1975 for the purpose of consolidating in Israel support for peace between Israel and the Palestinian people. By that time the PLO was already recognized by the Arab world as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the ICIPP recognized it as such. Although not at first perceived as our immediate goal, establishing contact with the PLO was considered a natural result of our efforts to establish a mechanism for dialogue. Because some sections of the PLO noticed and appreciated our existence, an opportunity for rapport soon arose. It is, therefore, true to say that practically from the very beginning the ICIPP's activity involved intensive contacts with the PLO. We believe that these contacts helped many in the PLO to better understand the conditions under which peace with Israel could be reached. But more importantly, they helped demonstrate to Israelis that talking to the PLO and reaching an understanding between the two parties was possible.

It must, however, be admitted that all this has not brought the idea of mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO nearer to fulfillment. The basic condition for such a development would be acceptance by Israel of the need to recognize the right of the Palestinians to self determination and to establish their own state in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Similarly, it would

require a clear demonstration on the part of the PLO accepting Israel's right to exist as a legitimate State. Unfortunately both these requirements have not been met. Yet we at the ICIPP have always felt that we were fulfilling an important role in just keeping the idea of a possible dialogue alive. During the ten years of our existence, the Israeli government accepted us as a legitimate organization operating within the law, in spite of occasional attempts to question our right to pursue our goals in the manner we chose.

However, the current National Coalition Government has decided to outlaw us by making any contact with the PLO, regardless of motive or consequences, a crime punishable by three years imprisonment. There are two reasons why such a shameless law could be legislated by the government. First, the fact that the two major parties are in coalition makes it difficult for one to accuse the other of being anti-peace and anti-liberal. Second, in light of the Arab world's readiness to make peace with Israel, which would necessitate Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, the government feels that possible dialogue with PLO might weaken its argument that in fact there is "no one to talk to". Thus we are now facing the danger that the mere attempt to discuss peace with an official of the PLO would be a crime. The day Israel adopts that law will be a dark day for all peace-loving people in Israel and elsewhere. That day may have already arrived by the time these notes appear in print.

Matti Peled  
December 1985

# To break the cycle of Hostility

Statement By  
THE ISRAELI COUNCIL FOR ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE

Published in "Ha'aretz", December 23, 1985

Statements by Prime Minister Shimon Peres, saying that Israel and Jordan are close to negotiations, inspired false hopes in the Israeli public, and indeed, little time has passed for them to be seen as merely another gimmick in international public relations.

Acrobatics will not resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; only negotiations in which the representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO, will also participate, together with all other parties to the conflict.

The framework for such negotiations is an international conference, in which the two super-powers and all the parties to the conflict will take part, sitting face to face, discussing ways to achieve peace. This will be the first time in which official Israeli representatives will sit together with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

The alternative to this conference is a new war, more vicious and terrible than its predecessors, a war which will deepen the hostility and the abyss between the peoples. In order to lay the groundwork and create a propitious climate for negotiations, all the parties must express a readiness to recognize each other, and pledge that during the duration of the international conference, they will be prepared to uphold a cease-fire - similar to the one achieved in July 1981 between Israel, then headed by Menachem Begin, and the PLO, headed by Yassir Arafat, which was broken in June 1982, when Israel embarked upon its disastrous war in Lebanon.

**IT IS POSSIBLE TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF WAR, IT MUST BE DONE!**