

The Other Israel

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for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
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Peres, Peace Now Movement and the PLO

Prime Minister Peres' declaration at the Labor Party convention in April that "WE RECOGNIZE THE PALESTINIANS AS A PEOPLE" is a distinct improvement from what former Labor Prime Minister Golda Meir had to say on the subject in the early seventies: "THERE ARE NO PALESTINIANS!"

When compared to the political attitudes of the Israeli Right (Likud to Kahane) vis-à-vis the Palestinian question (see below), Peres' statement (and others, such as his call for "Arab self rule in the Occupied Territories" and "Marshall Plan for the Middle East") leave the impression that we are dealing with an Israeli leader, working for peace in a troubled region. With such political right-wing rivals as Likud heads Shamir and Sharon, Peres and the Labor party, indeed, have no serious difficulties in nurturing such an image, especially abroad. However, in concrete political terms, Peres and his party have so far (late April) not given the slightest opening for negotiations. Statements to the affect that the "Palestinians are a people" or that they have "legitimate rights" or "self rule in the Occupied Territories" sound good, but they are meaningless unless accompanied by a clear, unequivocal recognition by Israel of both the Palestinians' right to self-determination and the PLO. These two elements, without which peace negotiations will never get off the ground (see this issue), were glaringly missing from the political platform adopted by the Labor Party convention.

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Peace Now movement spokesman, Tzali Reshef, called on Prime Minister Peres (April 14) to declare his readiness to negotiate with "any Palestinian representative willing to talk with Israel, including the PLO".

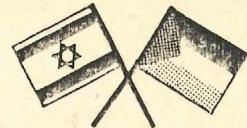
This was the first time that Peace Now has mentioned the PLO as a possible negotiating

partner. The movement's spokesman also called for democratic elections to be held in the Palestinian municipalities in the Occupied Territories. Labor party leaders reject both demands.

The Peace Now spokesman made these unprecedented statements during a joint Israeli-Palestinian demonstration against right-wing "Renaissance" party convention held in Occupied Hebron on April 14. For the first time since its foundation, Peace Now organized a joint demonstration with the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, in which Palestinian leaders identified with the PLO (Al-Fajr editor Hanna Siniora; deposed mayor of Hebron, Mustafa Abdel Nabi Natshe) took part. Labor party doves and left-of-center groups and parties including the PLP (Mohammed Mi'ari, Matti Peled, Uri Avnery) were invited to attend. Labor party doves led by MK Orna Namir, had pressured Peace Now heads not to invite the PLP, but the Palestinian leaders in the territories made their participation conditional on the PLP leaders being there.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin (Labor) permitted the Peace NOW demonstration, following his agreement to allow the right-wing "Renaissance" party to hold its party convention in the settlers movement stronghold of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron (largest settlement in the Occupied Territories). Leaders of this right-wing party, competing with Kahane for public support, have called for the deportation of 500,000 Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. (Party leader Professor Yuval Neeman is a crony of the noted American reactionary, Edward Teller, father of the Hydrogen bomb and chief advisor of President Reagan's Star Wars Project).

On the day of the demonstration, settler vigilantes set up roadblocks, forcing incoming Peace Now demonstrators to get off the buses and private vehicles. Citizens Rights MKs Shulamit Aloni and Yossi Sarid were harassed by the settler crowd. However, the brunt of the settlers' vituperations and violence was vented against PLP Executive co-chairman Uri Avnery, who together with Matti Peled and Yaakov Arnon are the chief Israeli spokesman for negotiations with the PLO. Avnery was beaten, pushed from a ledge and spat on by the raging settler crowd. Although trouble was expected, there were almost no security forces in the region, and the few that were there, handled the



settlers with kid gloves. Just for the sake of comparison: army units had only several hours earlier fired tear gas and forcibly entered one of the technical high schools in Hebron, following a stone throwing incident. 70 of the students were arrested. Hanna Siniora, like Avnery, was also trapped at one of the settler roadblocks. The settlers were in the mood of a lynching party, and it was only the sudden appearance of the military commander of the region which prevented the situation from getting completely out of hand. Given that the security forces knew quite well that the settlers planned to disrupt the Peace Now demonstration, one can only wonder whether Defense Minister Rabin (Labor) had not allowed the settlers a free hand in order to intimidate the Israeli peace camp.

Although opening late, the Peace Now

demonstration was held as scheduled. All of the Palestinian speakers (Siniora and Natshe) spoke of Israel's right to exist and demanded recognition of the PLO and an independent Palestinian State.

ANTI-PEACE LAW

Because of the religious establishment's continuing opposition to the anti-racist bill, the Knesset had made no moves on the Anti-Peace law in April. Both legislations have been linked like Siamese twins by the terms of the Labor-Likud agreement of February (see Other Israel, No. 20). The religious parties' opposition to the anti-racist bill – which is a farce – is thus serving the interests of the Peace movement!

The Editor

Prospects for peace?

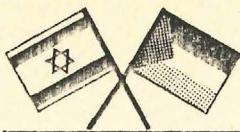
URI AVNERY IN JORDAN

Following his visit to Jordan (Feb. 28 – March 5) and his speaking tour with Hanna Siniora in the US, ICIPP member Uri Avnery has been speaking extensively in Israel and has published a series of articles in his Hebrew weekly news magazine "Ha-Olam Hazeh" about the state of Jordan-PLO relations. Avnery's conclusions, listed below, are based on talks held with Jordanian and PLO officials and Palestinian intellectuals affiliated with the PLO in the US. They are as follows:

- * Hussein will not enter in any negotiations with Israel without the massive support of the Palestinians.
- * The few Palestinians and Jordanians who may support a political move by the King without the PLO demand an Israeli guarantee that it be willing to withdraw from all of the Occupied Territories including East Jerusalem. (Israeli Labor Party leaders have made no such offers).
- * Thafer el-Masri's funeral (March 4) was a turning point. The King and his advisors's idea of a creating an alternative Palestinian leadership based in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was buried at the funeral (see Chronicle).
- * The principle of self-determination expresses a wide national consensus of the Palestinian people. The PLO cannot one-sidedly accept UN resolution 242 without a reciprocal American and/or Israeli recognition of the principle of

self-determination. This point is the major bone of contention between the PLO and Hussein.

- * Considering Palestinian-Jordanian relations in the past (the 50s and 60s), when under Hussein's rule their national aspirations were stifled, the PLO rebuff Hussein's reasoning that the question of self-determination is an internal Jordanian-Palestinian issue which can be resolved between them following an Israeli withdrawal as stipulated by UN resolution 242.
- * Unwilling to leave anything to chance, the PLO justifiably state that the Palestinian right to self-determination is not negotiable and as such it must be accepted by all the parties concerned, even before peace negotiations begin.
- * The Palestinian inhabitants of Jordan, who comprise approximately 65 percent of the population, and of whom many are a wealthy and integral part of the Jordanian establishment, consider themselves members of the Palestinian people. Although loyal to the King, they would not support any moves by him against the PLO.
- * The PLO and the Jordanians see differences existing between the Israeli Labor party and the Likud, the major difference, being that Labor, unlike Likud, is not ideologically committed to a "Greater Israel". Having to choose between Peres or Shamir, the Jordanians and Palestinians would prefer doing business with Peres.
- * Notwithstanding the current differences between Hussein and Arafat, both parties are linked to each other like Siamese twins. Only a dramatic change in the region, such as an Israeli occupation of Jordan or a deep crisis in the Arab world, can change this fact.



Chronicles OF THE PEACE STRUGGLE

16/2 - Thousands of residents from Israeli development towns demonstrated in front of the Prime Minister's Government office, protesting bankrupt conditions in the town councils' treasuries.

About 36 of the Israeli development towns, many of them founded in the fifties and sixties to accommodate incoming Oriental Jewish immigrants, are in heavy debt, together owing a sum estimated at more than 31 million dollars. No longer able to receive bank credit, the Jewish development town councils are having difficulties providing elementary services such as health care and education. Those residents in the towns living off agriculture and poultry raising are in such heavy debt that many of them cannot even afford to buy manure and fodder. Unemployment has increased significantly in these towns, and in some areas is as high as 20-30 percent (see this issue).

LEBANON WAR — 5 BILLION DOLLARS

Haim Barkai, a leading Israeli economist, estimated that the war in Lebanon cost Israel at least 5 billion dollars. Below are the figures as tabulated by Mr. Barkai, in dollars:

- 1) Direct cost — 2,250-2,500,000,000
- 2) Medical expenses and rehabilitation — 150-200,000,000
- 3) Repairs — 100-150,000,000
- 4) Military reserve — 500-700,000,000
- 5) Loss of production — 250,000,000
- 6) Foreign debt — 1,000,000,000
- 7) Arms development — 250,000,000

5/3 — In the Knesset, PLP MK Matti Peled denounced the assassination of Nablus (West Bank) appointed mayor, Thafer el-Massri, saying that like Said Hamami, Issam Sartawi and Fahed Kawasmeh before him, Massri was gunned down by the enemies of peace.

Peled commented that Mr. Massri was aware when he accepted the appointment of mayor (November 1985 — see *Other Israel*; No. 19) that he would become a symbol, proving that a tripartite peace agreement between the PLO, Jordan and Israel was possible. This, according to Peled, was precisely the reason why he was assassinated. (Massri, an Israel military appointee, had accepted his post only after receiving a green light from the PLO and Jordan).

The circles in Israel which now accuse Arafat for the murder have always failed to differentiate

between the rejectionists (such as Abu-Nidal) and the PLO led by Arafat.

In the event that Israel wants to lay the ground for peace, said Peled, it must implement two essential steps: (1) allow for free and democratic elections in the Occupied Territories, and (2) cease all settlements. However, even after such elections, concluded Peled, no local leadership in the Occupied Territories will want or be able to replace the political leadership of the Palestinian people, namely the PLO.

8/3 — In commemoration of International Women's Day the Israeli feminist progressive Magazine "Noga" sponsored a day of celebration commemorating Women's achievements.

Held at the Beit Lessin Auditorium in Tel-Aviv, the events sponsored by "Noga" and Beit Lessin included the showing of films made by women, musical performance, a feminist book sale and a gathering of Israeli feminists from the entire country.

— The feminist group "Women Against Violence Against Women" held a demonstration in memory of all the women who have fallen victims to male violence.

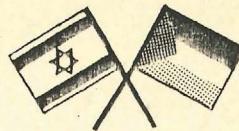
— The women's faction of "Taudi" (affiliated with the Communist party) held a Jewish-Arab rally in demonstration for peace, and against the occupation.

10/3 — Israeli and Palestinian writers living in Israel and in the Occupied Territories met for the second time in two months in Tel Aviv. All of the participants agreed that efforts should be made to translate the works of Israeli and Palestinian writers for the reading public of both peoples.

11/3-27/3 — TWO DECADES OF OCCUPATION — Symposium at Tel-Aviv University.

Hebron (West Bank), based advocate Jonathan Kuttab, revealed before a packed crowd of 300 students and guests that approximately 70 percent of the young male population in the Occupied Territories have on one occasion or another been detained by Israeli security forces using "security reasons" as the excuse. Palestinian youngsters suspected of throwing stones or participating in an anti-Israeli demonstration are rounded up by the security forces at night, usually between midnight and 4 A.M. Many of them have complained of being beaten during their internment and interrogation at one of the many military compounds scattered throughout the Occupied Territories. Often, said Mr. Kuttab, neither the family nor the lawyers know the whereabouts of their children, husbands or relatives for a period of up to 18 days. By the time legal representatives are permitted to see their clients, confessions have already been wrung out of them and are presented as evidence in dubious military trials — the results of which are usually known beforehand.

Professor of Law (University of Jerusalem) Ruth Gabison, in complementing Mr. Kuttab's remarks, stated that those Israeli military judges (many of whom are lawyers in civil life, acting as judges during their military reserve duty) known to



HUSSEIN, PLO AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

King Hussein's three and a half hour televised speech of Feb. 19, (see Other Israel, No. 20) which was a transparent attempt to question the PLO's position as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, has at the time of writing (late April) borne the monarch no results.

Holding the PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat responsible for the political deadlock because of his refusal to unconditionally accept UN resolutions 242 and 338, the King's target may have been the creation of an alternative leadership to the PLO, one that was to be based in the Occupied Territories. Response from the territories to the King's speech, which was favourably received by Israeli Labour Party circles, was quick to come. All the Palestinian dailies, without exception, (including the once pro-Jordanian "Al Kuds") were critical of his move, as were the entire local leadership in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, some of whom were formerly identified with the Monarch. During the funeral of Nablus (West Bank) mayor Thafer el Massri, who was gunned down on March 2nd, by a hitman belonging to the Palestinian rejectionist front, that criticism turned into a defiant Palestinian national demonstration against Israel, Jordan and Syria - the three states who have relegated themselves the dubious role of knowing best who represents the Palestinians. Denouncing all three of them, the thousands of participants in Massri's funeral, coming from all parts of the Occupied Territories, draped the dead mayor's coffin and the posters of Yassir Arafat's portrait with the Palestinian flag. Israeli security forces at the outskirts of the city dared not intervene for fear of a bloody clash. The message relayed by the inhabitants of the territories at Massri's funeral came exactly two weeks after King Hussein's speech, and later at Massri's memorial service (April 10) was, "WE ARE ALL PLO!"

give relatively light sentences are often not called on to preside in such trials. The total dependency of the military courts on their superiors is another aspect of the arbitrariness of the rule of law practiced in the Occupied Territories, said Ms. Gabison. Anything even remotely smacking of Palestinian nationalism is considered by the military authorities to be a security threat. Two sets of completely different legal standards are therefore being practiced in the Occupied Territories; one for the Israeli settlers and the other for the Palestinians, commented Ms. Gabison.

One of the interesting sessions in the Symposium "The Way to Negotiations", in which Labor dove MK Ora Namir, PLP MK Matti Peled, and Palestinians Hanna Siniora and Faiz abu-Rachma (slated PLO representatives) were to participate was cancelled at the last moment because the Palestinian guests were holding talks in the US with government officials. (Mr. Uri Avnery,

member of the ICPP and co-chairman of the FLP Executive made an extensive speaking tour in the US with Mr. Siniora during the time of the symposium).

The symposium was sponsored jointly by FORUM, a left-of-center group of lecturers at the Tel-Aviv University, and the International Center for Peace in the Middle East. An average of 200-250 students and guests attended each of the dozen two-hour sessions, extending over a period of two and a half weeks.

14/3 - Arik Shapira, a young and well known Israeli composer of modern music and an activist in the Israeli Peace Movement, protested the premiere of his new work in the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories. "Those who are using my work in the Occupied Territories", said Mr. Shapira, "aim at giving the impression that the territories are a 'normal' place where classical music can be heard".

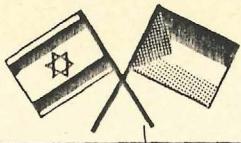
Shapira declared that he will donate all his royalties to the Palestinian Al-Hakawati theater group, based in East Jerusalem.

24/3 - Racist Kahane and a small group of his supporters were pelted with tomatoes, apples and eggs when they demonstrated in front of the Kibbutz Artzi offices (affiliated with Mapam party) in Tel-Aviv. After half an hour, Kahane and his supporters left the premises, escorted by the police. The Mapam youth movement, along with other groups, has been extremely active against Kahane's movement.

26/3 In a press conference held in Tel-Aviv, heads of the Jewish communities in the Negev, the southern region of Israel comprising 62 percent of the country's pre-'67 land area, protested the government's policy of channelling funds to the Occupied Territories at the expense of the Negev. "It is inconceivable", said one of the speakers at the conference, "that settlements in the Occupied Territories will benefit from all the funds and we receive nothing". Besides the heavy debts of the development towns in the region, moshavim (cooperatives) and kibbutzim (collectives) in the area must return loans of 150 and 100 million dollars respectively. The speakers concluded by saying that it is time for the government to begin doing something for the Negev.

30/3 - Yeroham (population 6000; founded 1951), the first Israeli development town in the country's southern Negev region, went on strike for an indefinite period of time until the government takes definite steps to resolve its serious economic and social problems. 25 percent of the town's workforce are currently unemployed. As in all of the country's development towns, young discharged soldiers no longer return to the town and its population is steadily dwindling. Due to the strike, schools are shut, the municipality has closed its doors, and so have the few local industries.

1/4 - Fifteen buses packed to the brim with



residents of development towns throughout the country came to Yeroham in support of the town's strike, which is now in its third day.

2/4 - The secretariat of the Organization of the Development Towns called for a one hour strike in all the development towns in the country in support of Yeroham.

The economic crisis and the settlements

The economic crisis in Israel has become so acute that even some Labor leaders such as Gad Yaakobi, Minister for the Economy, have for the first time clearly come out in favour of cuts in government spending on settlement projects in the Occupied Territories.

Many leading Israeli economic concerns and social services are in heavy debt, and will go bankrupt unless the government backs them financially. Solel Boneh, the largest construction firm in Israel, which is owned by the Labor-dominated Federation of Labor ("Histadrut"), is in debt for 500 million dollars; Kupat Cholim, the country's largest national health fund service, also owned by the Federation of Labor, has a debt of 400 million dollars; Zim, the national shipping company, is in debt for several hundred million dollars. In all of these firms and social services, as well as elsewhere in the country drastic cuts in the workforce have been implemented. For example, 3,000 workers of Solel Boneh, 60 percent of them Arabs, have been laid off from work recently. Several thousand workers of the country's largest textile concern, Atta, have become unemployed when the firm folded several months ago. It is obvious that the government will under no circumstances allow the national health fund or the construction firm Solel Boneh to fold, because doing so would have the domino effect of bringing about the faltering of numerous other concerns.

* * *

Slashing the enormous Israeli Defense budget, which is estimated at more than 20 percent of overall national budget for 1986, could foot the bill for practically all the economic and social ills of the country, but no one in the government - Labor or Likud - dare to touch this holy cow. Tensions between Israel and Syria, in and out of Lebanon, together with American policy-makers' warmongering in the Mediterranean (bombing of Libyan military installations on March 25 and mid-

April) have been used by the Israeli military establishment and its political supporters as arguments against cuts in defense spending. With the peace initiative currently at an impasse, largely because Israel / US refusal to budge on the Palestinian question, political tensions in the region will remain, as will the enormous defense outlays.

Economics may therefore succeed in doing what elementary moral values and political realism have not - force Israeli leaders to ease their grip on the Occupied Territories. No amount of American aid, now standing at 3 billion dollars a year, can alleviate the country's economic ills. The financial bankruptcy of Jewish and Arab municipalities, faltering economic concerns, and the steep rise in unemployment are factors which Labor-Likud politicians will not be indefinitely able to shut their eyes to.

TOUR IN AMERICA - URI AVNERY (ICIPP) AND HANNA SINIORA (PLO)

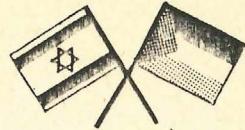
In a marathon 10 day lecture tour in the US (March 10-20), Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery and Hanna Siniora (slated PLO delegate for the West Bank) met with US Senators, Congressmen, State Department officials, Jewish and Palestinian groups, and writers and intellectuals.

Among others, they spoke with Senators Charles Mathias, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Congressmen Steve Solarz, Ben Gilman and Larry Smith; the Committee of Presidents of the Arab Organizations in America; the American Jewish Committees in Washington D.C. and New York; the organization of expatriates from the West Bank towns of Ramallah and El-Bireh, the largest American-Palestinian group in the US; and New Jewish Agenda members in Washington and Boston. There were also meetings with Arab journalists in Washington and with the editors of the New York Times, Boston Globe, Christian Science Monitor and the weekly "The Nation". Speaking engagements were held, in



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addition, before Jewish-Arab audiences in Washington, New York, Boston and Baltimore.

Notwithstanding the fact that Israeli journalists were present at several of the press conferences given by Avnery and Siniora during the tour, there was little mention of it in the Israeli press.

The political principles for peace as espoused by Avnery and Siniora during their trip were similar:

- * The PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
- * In return for PLO recognition of UN resolutions 242 and 338 the Palestinians demand American and/or Israeli recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination.
- * The peace process, which came to a standstill following King Hussein's speech (Feb. 19, see Other Israel, No. 20), must be renewed.

Hanna Siniora, a delegate picked by PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat to represent the West Bank in future talks and accepted as such by Israeli Prime Minister Peres and King Hussein, declared during the more than 50 speaking engagements that in order to ameliorate Israeli fears the Palestinians would agree to demilitarization of the Palestinian State. The Palestinians, said Mr. Siniora, would channel all their efforts to economic development of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to the absorption of Palestinian refugees. Referring to the question of terror, Siniora denounced Palestinian armed struggle outside the territorial boundaries of Israel-Palestine and said that the PLO is also against terrorist attacks aimed at women and children in the country. However, the PLO said Hanna Siniora, cannot one-sidedly cease the armed struggle against military objectives in the Occupied Territories. He declared that the PLO would be willing to stop even this, once peace negotiations begin.

Both Avnery and Siniora demanded a renewal of the American peace efforts, pointing out that unless progress is made, a new round of fighting may break out between Israel and Syria. Fundamentalist Islamic revolutions threaten to engulf the entire region. "There is only one way of managing Middle East crises" said Avnery repeatedly to the American audiences, "and that is by preventing them". Avnery noted that the American administration and news media unfortunately seem to be currently more occupied with events in Central America than with the Israeli-Arab conflict. "Everything will change, however, if Islamic revolutions break out in Egypt or Saudi Arabia or in case a Hummeini regime comes to power in Iraq". These messages were conveyed by both speakers during all of their engagements.

Black leader Jesse Jackson granted Avnery and Siniora a joint interview, which was published simultaneously in Ha'olam Hazeh and al-Fajr, (Palestinian daily) and The Nation published an article written jointly by Avnery and Siniora.

IS THE M.E. PEACE PROCESS DOOMED TO FAIL?

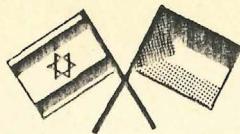
The 1974 Rabat Conference resolution has unanimously recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Since then, that resolution has been part of the Arab consensus: no party dares to dispute it.

Israel, on its side, refuses (with full US support) to deal with the PLO. However, America's refusal is not adamant in that it asserts that the PLO's acceptance of the Security Council's resolution 242, along with other concessions, would bring about a thaw in US-PLO relations. The problem has been that 242 does not recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, and depicts the Palestinians as refugees only.

For these reasons, King Hussein and the PLO reached an agreement in February 1985, born out by the necessities of both sides. That agreement has been extremely fragile given that both parties from the very start have opposing interests.

Because US influence on Israel is so overwhelming, both Arafat and Hussein turned towards Washington in order to pave the way for an international conference and obtain certain assurances of its eventual outcome. The American negotiators have not made many concessions, and the half-hearted, tentative American understanding that the Palestinians have ambiguous "legitimate rights" is far from the minimal requirements needed by the moderate PLO wing of the divided Palestinian national movement. Their basic demand - recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, as well as full participation of the PLO in any international peace conference - are far from being met. Any Israeli who is striving for genuine peace, must accept these PLO demands and the latter on its part must recognize Israel.

The present cessation of the joint Jordanian-PLO dialogue should not come to us as a surprise. However, the final word in the peace process has not yet been said. Since a permanent stalemate in the Middle East seems improbable, the alternative may be active preparation for yet another war. This would be disastrous for all the participants: Israel may suffer in such a war much more than in any of its previous rounds; the Palestinians, in case war erupts, may face a major, new refugee problem and the Jordanian Kingdom could be devastated as never before. Politically, all the parties involved could find themselves in a dangerous international political situation, the outcome of which nobody can foresee today. The uneasy Jordanian-PLO collaboration might therefore be resumed. However, without a real



American and/or Israeli change of mind, a significant breakthrough cannot be expected. It is a vital Israeli interest to recognize that a direct Israeli-PLO understanding is urgent for the continuous existence and security of the State of Israel. Such an understanding as the first step towards peace, by simultaneous mutual recognition, could be achieved with or without US mediation.

ISRAEL LOEFF

Issam Sartawi Three years after

Much has been said and written about the late Palestinian peace-activist, Dr. Issam Sartawi, ever since he was gunned down three years ago in Portugal (10.4.83) by a rejectionist member of his own people.

Many people who have mourned Sartawi, have depicted him as a "moderate Palestinian" (as opposed to the "hard-liners" in the PLO). Thus, it is important to mention that Sartawi was a devoted member of the PLO, who both loved the organization and was proud of it, even though he found himself more than once in disagreement with his comrade-in-arms concerning the strategy which the PLO should endorse in order to attain its national goals.

Sartawi, in piloting the PLO dialogue with the Israeli peace forces (most notably with the AICIPP), never acted on his own nor was he ever disassociated from his organization. On the contrary, he was guided by explicit, albeit informal, instructions from his superiors, both before and after the 13th session of the Palestinian National Council (1977) had endorsed dialogue with the Israeli peace forces as its official policy. And yet, Sartawi had his own views as to the tempo required for achieving a just Israeli-Palestinian peace.

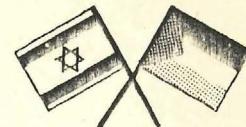
Amongst friends and rivals alike, Sartawi was often called "Rajul al-khutuwat al-sari'a" ("Man of the rapid steps"). The timetable of the PLO mainstream, which nurtured the Palestinian "unity of the ranks", was much more cautious. And of course, there were also those Palestinian elements who rejected the idea of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue altogether. Indeed, Sartawi was impatient. He sensed the daily plight of his people under occupation. He realized that time was running short, and accomplished facts, (Jewish settlements), were being set up on Palestinian land every day and every hour. Above all, he believed that political dynamism on the part of the PLO was not only crucial but possible, despite all the obstacles, frustrations and disappointments. This

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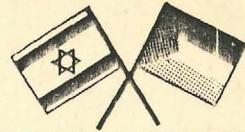
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was the root of the dispute between him and many of his close friends, including those who, as a matter of principle, shared his view concerning the importance of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

Sartawi never denied that those who advocate mutual Israeli-PLO recognition and respect for the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people constitute a minority in the Israeli people. Many Palestinians, while appreciating us as "nice guys", have often wondered whether a dialogue with the peace camp is useful for the Palestinian cause given that we are such a marginal force. It makes better sense, according to these Palestinians, to wait patiently until changed circumstances allow for negotiations with the Israeli mainstream, which for the time being rejects negotiations with the PLO under any conditions. Sartawi, on the other hand, had always appreciated the importance of the Israeli peace movement beyond their quantitative weight. He argued that favourable moves on the part of the PLO would strengthen and increase the political power and credibility of the Israeli peace forces, thus enabling it to pressure the Israeli mainstream to adopt realistic positions vis-à-vis the Palestinian question.

Following his assassination, the ICIPP set up a fund bearing his name. It grants annual prizes aimed at encouraging the study and development of themes dealing with the Palestinian society and Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. It is encouraging to learn, over and over again, that there are people in Israel and elsewhere who dedicate their energies and intellectual talents to that purpose.

Issam Sartawi was a unique person, who without doubt represented the humane face of the Palestinian revolution. We all miss him in our common efforts to cope with the challenges confronting both our peoples.

YOSSI AMITAY

ICIPP SARTAWI PRIZE

The sudden death of our friend, Dr. Sami Mar'i, on the day he was to receive the ICIPP Sartawi Prize was a shock to us and the entire Israeli Peace Movement. Gathering in "Bnei-Brit" auditorium in Tel-Aviv (April 10) for the annual distribution of the prize, members of the ICIPP thought of

cancelling the event for that evening, but on second thoughts decided to convene it anyway in his honour and memory. Dr. Mar'i, Professor of Education and Psychology at Haifa University, received the Sartawi Prize for his pioneering studies in Arab education in Israel. Gdalia Besser, well known Israeli actor and director (Haifa Theatre) received the second half of the prize on behalf of the writer (Yehoshua Sobol) and actors (Jews and Arabs) of the play "The Palestinian", which depicts movingly the difficulties of Arab-Jewish co-existence. Edmond Shehadeh, Nazareth-based Palestinian poet and playwright received a third prize for his plays dealing with the domestic problems facing the Palestinian community in Israel.

In a discussion which followed the distribution of prizes, Uri Avnery talked of Sartawi's tireless efforts to bring the PLO mainstream to recognize the Israeli public as the ultimate factor which the organization should consider. Matti Peled, speaking of the PLO-Jordan-Israel triangle, said that so far, that triangle is only theoretical. Aside from the significant concessions made by the PLO — such as its agreement to confederate the Palestinian State with Jordan and its willingness to give up an independent PLO delegation and appear jointly with the Jordanians — Israel and Jordan have made no reciprocal moves to match the political concessions made by the PLO which are in the words of Peled, "unprecedented in the history of modern national movements". Dr. Ariech Simon, well known Israeli educator, and winner of the prestigious government-sponsored "Israel Prize" (1985) for his years of outstanding work with socially deprived youth, talked on whether it was possible to educate for peace. Overcoming stereotype thinking, said Dr. Simon, was the most important element in educating for peace. A short film called "An Israeli Scene", by Iftach Katzor (one of the actors in the play "The Palestinian") closed the evening. The film shows the behind-the-scenes preparations of the play "The Palestinian" and brings candid interviews with its Jewish and Arab players, writer, director and stage hands. All of the Arab actors spoke of being torn between their loyalties to the state of Israel and their identification with the plight of their Palestinian brethren in the Occupied Territories and the diaspora.

With deep sorrow we announce the death of our friend

DR. SAMI KHALIL MAR'I

Died from heart failure on April 10, 1986 at Hadassa Hospital, Jerusalem at the age of 46. Born in the village of Kabri in Palestine, his family was forced to leave it in 1948, moving to the village of 'Ar'ara where he was raised. He was educated in Israel and received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the Hebrew University, and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Mar'i worked as instructor in Arab schools and teacher training colleges and served as research associate at the Hebrew University Institute for Innovation in Education and as Director of the Institute for Research and Development of Arab Education at Haifa University. Sami was an active member of the Progressive Movement and member of the Executive of the Progressive List for Peace. He left a wife (Dr. Maryam Mar'i) and two children. Sami was brought to rest in 'Ar'ara.