

The Other Israel

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for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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AT THE CROSSROADS

A growing number of Israeli citizens face a status quo which they feel is untenable. Palestinian opposition to the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is on the rise; violent demonstrations take place daily; Israeli soldiers and settlers are attacked in various parts of the occupied territories; an Israeli army officer was shot to death, in broad daylight, on Gaza's main street, (and Israeli officials admitted the action to have been "daring" and "audacious").

In Israel itself, the Arab citizens outspokenly express their unwillingness to remain second-class citizens. On June 24, declared to be "Equality Day", practically the entire Arab population of Israel participated in a general strike, demanding the redress of several pressing abuses. The strike call was endorsed by the entire Arab political leadership, ranging from the Progressive List for Peace and the Communist Party to the Arab members of the Israeli Labor Party. Despite the government's attempts to stop the strike, the number of strike-breakers was negligible. (In the government's favor, it must be mentioned that, unlike during the "Day of the Land" strike in 1976, no army units were sent into Arab villages, and thus, violence and bloodshed were avoided.)

Confronted with this upsurge, the State of Israel finds itself faced with the urgent necessity of coming to terms with its situation in the Middle East, with its Arab neighbors, with its own Arab citizens. Not all Israelis are, as yet, ready for this; some, unwilling to face the implications of this process, seek refuge in extremism.

For many years, Rabbi Meir Kahane held the dubious distinction of being the only Israeli politician to openly advocate the expulsion of the Arabs from Israel and the occupied territories. Other political leaders, even those of the extreme right, shied away from publicly endorsing such ideas.

In July 1987, this situation changed drastically; two respectable members of the Israeli establishment openly voiced their support for the "transfer" of the Arabs. One of them was Major-General (res.) Rehavam Ze'evi, a veteran of the prestigious pre-state "Palmach" militia, a personal friend of many of Israel's political and economic leaders, and the curator of the Tel-Aviv municipal museum. The second new champion of "transfer" is then Michael Dekel, Deputy Defence Minister in the National Unity Government, a member in good standing of the Likud block, and a close associate of Prime Minister Shamir.

The racist statements of Ze'evi and Dekel aroused angry reactions in the press; a demonstration was held in front of Dekel's house; several motions of no confidence in the government were presented in the Knesset. However, the Israeli Labor Party—which, in the past, has precipitated cabinet crises over trifles—chose to make no more than token protests against Dekel's statement. Defence Minister Rabin, who has the legal right to fire his deputy,

refrained from doing so.

Dekel's own party contended itself by stating that the "transfer" is "Dekel's private idea".

Simultaneously with these developments, in various places local racists have made attempts to implement the "transfer" in practice: in Ramat-Amidar, a suburb of Tel-Aviv, a mob broke into an apartment, wounded the Arab inhabitants and set the apartment on fire; in Petach-Tikva, the slogan "Arabs Out" was painted on a car belonging to an Arab inhabitant of the town; in the resort town of Netanyah, thugs assaulted the members of an Oriental Jewish family who spoke Arabic ...

Clearly, the racists have no chance for long-term success; in the second half of the twentieth century, their course can only lead Israel to national suicide. More and more Israelis come to realize that their future can only be safeguarded through peace and coexistence. Anti-racists demonstrators take to the streets of the Israeli cities. The Anti-Peace Law, forbidding Israelis to meet PLO representatives is again and again openly defied. A group of Labor doves met PLO officials (see separate article), with the party leadership turning a blind eye. Even the Likud is no longer monolithic:

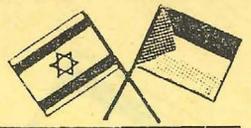
While Michael Dekel made his infamous proposal, his Likud colleague, Minister Moshe Arens, placed in charge of Arab Affairs, startled the Israeli public in quite a different way: Arens declared his support for returning the villagers of Iqrit and Bir'am, in the Gallailee, to the villages from which they were uprooted nearly forty years ago. Though hedged with various unpalatable conditions, Arens' proposal was more than any previous government offered to these villagers.

The struggle for Israel's future is on. At all levels, Israeli society is becoming divided and polarized. In the coming period, the vital forces of this society will be put to the test.

The editor

Demands of the Arab General Strike

The demands were formulated in a meeting held at the town of Sefaram in the Gallailee, on June 6, in which practically the entire leadership of citizens participated: Arab Knesset Members, Mayors, trade unionists, and many others. They included the cessation of the destruction of Arab houses declared "illegal" by the government; the granting of official recognition to several Arab villages which, at present, are not recognized by the government and



thus receive no water or electricity; the building of new schools in the Arab sector, where no less than 1400 new classrooms are needed to create adequate conditions for study; the re-definition of the curriculum in the Arab schools, to reflect the Arab population's national and cultural identity; emergency funding for the Arab municipalities, whose debts now reach 50 million Israeli Shekels (about 30 million Dollars), and equalization, within a reasonable time, between the budgets granted to Arab municipalities and those given to Jewish municipalities of comparable size.

Big Brother comes to the occupied territories

As these words are being written, a far-reaching change is taking place in the Israeli administration of the occupied territories. Part of a big office building in Tel-Aviv has been declared a "restricted military area", to which only holders of special passes—mainly senior officials and army officers—are admitted. Inside, Israeli computer experts are engaged in a giant project: personal data on each individual living under occupation are being placed in a computer's memory. As described to the press, this includes "any conceivable kind of information on the population, including data on properties, land ownership, pedigrees, licences, professions, consumption habits and other details". (**Koteret Rashit**, July 29, 1987).

The purposes of this project are described in such terms as "to deepen Israeli control and strategic monitoring of the territories" and "to have full real-time control on the flow of data in the territories".

To those familiar with the methods used by the military government in the occupied territories, it is not difficult to decipher such code-phrases. It is known, for example, that in the occupied territories licences or permits are not given as of right. Licences for driving, for building, for opening a business, for growing certain agricultural products, for travelling abroad, for exporting or importing through the Jordan bridges—the granting of all these and of many others could be made conditional upon an individual's willingness to collaborate with the military authorities. So far, this system of "rewards and punishments" was mainly administered through agents of the General Security Service (Shabak), each one of whom has a Palestinian village or town "under his wing" (see issue 26, p.9). Now, this will be augmented by a centralized, computerized control.

Another area in which the new computer will, probably, be used is the acquisition of new land for Jewish settlements. The government's legal experts are ever on the lookout for obscure legal loopholes, through which Arab possession of land could be negated. In the maze of Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Israeli laws, concerning land ownership in the occupied territories, the exact status of certain parcels of land is often dubious or unclear. Land disputes may last decades or generations.

Computerized records of land ownership and of each Arab peasant's ancestry might prove useful to the Justice Ministry's legal experts in their zealous efforts to declare the lands to be "State Property", and therefore available to Israeli settlers.

At the time of writing, the "Computerization Project" is still under way. Putting in that amount of data will yet last for some time—time which could be used to join the struggle to halt the project. Protest letters should be sent to: Itzhak Rabin, Defence Ministry, Ha-Kiryat, Tel-Aviv, Israel (or to the nearest Israeli embassy).

Extreme nationalism ...

Most readers of Yediot Aharonot, Israel's largest newspaper, were, probably, not excited by the following short news item which appeared in the issue of August 16, 1987:

The Ministry of the Interior issued, last week, a closure order against the Arab-language newspaper **Al-Gamair**, appearing in Nazareth. The reason for the closure was the paper's extreme nationalist editorial line.

The decision to close the newspaper was taken after its editors were warned by the Interior Minister's District Commissioner. They were requested to moderate their paper's nationalist line, but did not do so.

It is not the first time that an Arab-language newspaper is harassed or closed. The role of the powerful District Commissioners in "controlling" those Israelis who happen to be Arab, is also rather well-known.

What might have puzzled some, on more close reading, was the stated reason for the closure. Since when is extreme nationalism in Israel a reason to close a newspaper? Certainly the Interior Ministry never regarded this as a reason to close down Hebrew newspapers, however extreme their nationalism.

But, of course, every Israeli understands that what is meant is not just nationalism, but Arab nationalism.

The Anti-Peace Law: Update

On June 17, the Anti-Peace Trial, in which four Israelis are accused of having met PLO representatives in Rumania, opened. From the start the defence, conducted by lawyers Amnon Zichroni and Avigdor Feldman, made clear its intention to widen the scope of the trial and touch upon more fundamental issues.

The first prosecution witness was cabinet secretary Elyakim Rubinstein. In cross-examining him, the defence challenged the very definition of the PLO as a "terrorist organization". Adv. Feldman enumerated various organizations affiliated to the PLO, such as trade-unions, welfare institutions, writers' and artists' associations, women's organizations, and the like—asking the witness whether all of these are engaged in terrorist activity.

The big sensation of the trial, so far, was provided by the second witness, a senior operative of the General



Security Service (Shabak). Answering the defence lawyers' questions, the Shabak man stated that the positions of PLO representatives became more moderate after they meet Israelis. Moreover, he confirmed that official representatives of the Israeli government have secretly met with PLO representatives.

These revelations, published in the Israeli press, proved rather embarrassing to the government. Prime Minister Shamir's aide hastened to publish a communique, admitting that such meetings did take place, but asserting that their sole purpose was to obtain the release of Israeli soldiers captured by the PLO.

The next session of the Anti-Peace Trial was set for September.

A few days before this trial begun, another meeting between Israelis and PLO representatives took place in Budapest. This delegation, including 21 members, was headed by Knesset Member Charlie Biton, head of the Oriental Jewish "Black Panthers" group, a component of the Communist-led Chadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality). Several members of the delegation were inhabitants of slum neighborhoods. The Israeli Communist Party had a central role in organizing the delegation, but it also included some individual members of Mapam. The latter participated without a mandate to represent their party, but unlike the situation of November 1986, when Mapam Secretary-General Granot publicly denounced the meeting with the PLO in Rumania, this time Mapam kept silent.

The Palestinian delegation was headed by Mahmud Abas ("Abu-Mazen"), and Abd el-Razak al-Yekhya, members of the PLO Executive (the de-facto cabinet). Though Abu Mazen had often met with Israelis in the past, the previous meetings had been kept secret. In the Budapest meeting, on the contrary, every effort was made to ensure the widest possible publicity. Israeli and foreign

Labor members meet with PLO representatives

At the end of July, members of the Israeli Labor Party's "Young Guard" met with PLO representatives, during an international conference held in Madrid. As they told "**Hadashot**" newspaper, the young Laborites had set up an information distribution table. There they were approached by PLO members, headed by Hani el-Hasan, a senior aide of Arafat.

In the discussion which developed, the PLO representatives said they are ready to accept the June 1967 borders, after Israel and the PLO recognize each other.

One of the Palestinians present at Madrid was Fatma Barnawi, a woman member of the PLO who has spent a long period in an Israeli prison. She told the Laborites that, after being released and returning to the PLO ranks, she was assigned the duty of taking care of six Israeli soldiers who were at that time held by the PLO in Lebanon. She asked the Israelis to convey her regards to the six, who are now back in Israel.

newspapers prominently displayed the photographs of Biton and Abu-Mazen embracing each other at the end of the meeting.

Abu Mazen, speaking in Budapest to a reporter of the French News Agency, stated that "once negotiations with Israel have begun, the Palestinians would be willing to stop all acts of violence, provided that Israel would do the same".

After their return to Israel, several members of the delegation were interrogated by the police, and it is possible that some of them will be prosecuted. Apparently, however, the authorities find it impossible to prosecute KM Biton because of his parliamentary immunity. Israeli law gives Knesset Members an absolute immunity from prosecution for any act undertaken in the course of parliamentary duty. Biton, who was elected on a platform advocating Israeli-Palestinian peace, regards participation in a meeting with the PLO as a fulfilment of his voters' mandate.

One result of the Budapest meeting was an intensification of the internal debate within Mapam, on the issue of negotiating with the PLO. In this debate, filling the pages of *Al HaMishmar*, Mapam's daily, the party's right-wing seems to lose ground, while many members, especially among the younger ones, take up more consistent positions towards peace.

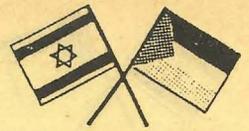
On July 7, the Knesset debated four proposals to abolish the Anti-Peace law and re-legalize meetings with the PLO; the motions were initiated by the Progressive List for Peace, the Israeli Communist Party, Mapam and Ratz. The proposals succeeded in drawing the support of many Labor Knesset members. For a time, it seemed that a majority could be found for the peace parties' proposal. However, at the last moment several more Likud KMs were brought in, and the Anti-Peace Law was reconfirmed. The four initiating parties declared their intention to re-introduce their proposals at regular intervals, until the Anti-Peace Law is abolished.

Between August 1986 (when the Anti-Peace Law was passed) and July 1987, a number of meetings between Israelis and PLO representatives took place. About ten Israeli citizens were interrogated by the police on suspicion of having broken the law. All of them were treated fairly decently, none of them threatened or mishandled ... as long as all of them were Jews.

Regarding Israeli citizens who happen to be Arab, the police feels far less restraint. In the beginning of August 1987, Hasan Jabarin, an and a leading member of the "Ansar" group in the Arab town Um-el-Fahm was arrested. The police alleges that he secretly met senior PLO leaders in Yugoslavia - which he completely denies. He told his relatives that he is being denied sleep, kept tied up, and that his interrogators often cover his head with a sack, for hours at a time.

Two demonstrations calling for his release - one at his prison and the other in East Jerusalem - were violently dispersed. An attempt was even made to use censorship to prevent any publication of Jabarin's detention; but this was foiled by Knesset Member Matti Peled, who revealed the full details of it on the Knesset floor. At the time of writing, Hasan Jabarin has already been imprisoned for more than three weeks.

The "Ansar" group is loosely allied with the Progressive List for Peace, though not affiliated to it.



An Israeli-PLO meeting of quite a different kind may soon take place in the Lydda military court, where fifteen PLO fighters, captured by the Israeli navy on a ship bound to Lebanon, are undergoing trial. One of them, Ali Abu-Luz, has headed the team of PLO security guards who protected Uri Avnery during his July 1982 visit to Israeli-besieged West Beirut, and his meeting there with Yasser Arafat. In the same period, Abu-Luz also participated in guarding Aharon Ahiaz, an Israeli combat pilot who was, at that time, a PLO prisoner of war.

In 1987, after Abu-Luz himself became a prisoner and was put on trial, his lawyer approached Avnery and Ahiaz, asking them to appear as character witnesses for him. Both of them agreed, but the military judges ruled that such testimonies would be "unnecessary".

Walid Fahum, Abu-Luz's lawyer, intends to appeal to the Supreme Court against this ruling. The results of this appeal will determine whether the meeting, or rather reunion, of Avnery, Ahiaz and Abu-Luz, under the eye of military judges, will indeed take place.

American Jewish delegation launches dialogue with PLO

The following is the text of a statement issued in Washington, D.C. on June 12, 1987.

A delegation of American Jews returned this week from meetings in Tunis with Chairman Yasser Arafat and other top leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The effort of the delegation to open a direct dialogue with the PLO ran counter to moves in Washington and Israel to block such exchanges. The group reported that the PLO expressed a clear and strong interest in achieving a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The delegation included Hilda Silverman of Philadelphia, representing New Jewish Agenda, Mary Appelman of Downers Grove, Illinois, representing the America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and Jerome Segal of Washington, D.C., representing Washington Area Jews for an Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

The organizations represented in the Tunis delegation support the right of the Palestinian people to self determination, including the right to the establishment, if they so choose, of an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, existing at peace with Israel. They further support the inclusion of the PLO in any peace negotiations.

The delegation issued the following statement:

We came to Tunis in order to meet with Chairman Yasser Arafat and members of his staff and with members of the PLO Executive Committee. We were graciously received and engaged in considerable discussion during more than a week. We had the opportunity to speak with leaders of several of the constituent groups of the recently reunified PLO. In all instances we were given a respectful hearing. Through our discussions we felt we were able to gain a fuller understanding of PLO actions, positions, and sensibilities as well as to convey some of our deepest concerns. We communicated to the PLO the depths of misgivings in the American public and Jewish community concerning PLO objectives, and stressed the need for straightforward expressions of a PLO commitment to an end to armed struggle should an independent Palestinian State emerge from negotiations.

It was clear to us that the PLO believes that over the

last several years they have made substantial efforts toward peace. Those with whom we spoke emphasized the support of all PLO constituent groups at the recent PNC meeting in Algiers for a negotiated settlement of the Middle East conflict. They expressed disappointment at the lack of response from the United States and Israel to their initiatives for peace. They also indicated that these initiatives have not been accurately reported by the U.S. media.

We realize that the PLO's interest in negotiations does not mean that achieving a peace settlement will be easy. In this respect, we note that PLO leaders repeatedly stressed two key moral claims: 1) the Palestinian people have suffered a basic injustice in being dispossessed from their land; and 2) the Palestinians have a fundamental moral right to resist occupation.

Based on our discussions, we believe that PLO leaders understand the importance of peaceful relations among all states in the region, including Israel and an independent Palestinian State.

We were pleased to observe the great importance placed on expanding dialogue with Israeli Jews, and the welcoming of dialogue with American Jews.

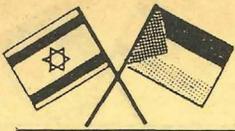
We find it ironic and unsettling that in Israel members of delegations such as ours are faced with the threat of jail upon returning to their country, and that in the United States legislation has been introduced that would close PLO offices and otherwise restrict contacts between the PLO and the American public. The path to peace lies in the other direction.

NGO conference in New York

At the end of June, a conference of North American NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations) on the question of Palestine took place at the U.N. headquarters in New York. I participated in it as an observer, at the invitation of the America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (AICIPP). The conference's participants included a wide spectrum of organizations, widely differing in size and character. In general, they may be divided into two broad categories: those motivated principally by solidarity with the Palestinian people and identification with its fate; and those whose motivation derives from the desire to end the bloodshed and establish peace in the Middle East. In themselves, of course, these two motivations are not at all contradictory; but some solidarity groups—though by no means all—still cling to rejectionist positions which the Palestinian leadership itself abandoned long ago.

The showdown came on the last day of the conference, over repeated obstruction of a draft resolution calling for the establishment of a Palestinian State **beside the State of Israel**. In a startling move, the PLO delegation which participated in the conference threw its weight behind the contested resolution, which—being sponsored jointly by the Jewish-American "New Jewish Agenda" and the Palestinian-American "United Holy Land Fund"—obtained a large majority, definitely committing the North American NGO's to the two-state solution.

Veterans of previous North American NGO conferences remarked the on unprecedented large and conspicuous presence of American Jews, both through organizations such as "New Jewish Agenda" and "The International Jewish Peace Union", and as members of groups not specifically Jewish. This probably reflects a slowly



changing consciousness in the American Jewish community; criticism of the Israeli government, while not yet fully accepted, no longer encounters the wall of blind and hysterical hostility, which earlier critical Jewish organizations such as "Breira" had to face.

Parallel with the conference, an NGO delegation—of which I was a member—met with members of the U.N. delegations of several countries, to discuss their governments' positions on the issue of convening a Middle East peace conference. The countries contacted included the U.S., Canada, France, Britain, West Germany, Austria, Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark and Norway. Several of the meetings lasted far beyond the allotted time, giving an illuminating insight into the Middle East policies of the West European and North American governments, and into the workings of the U.N. General Assembly. Most of our interlocutors were, naturally, the Middle East experts of the various delegations, but in several cases, the ambassadors participated personally.

During my stay in New York, I also addressed a public meeting held at the Village Gate; other speakers included the Israeli lawyer Lea Tsemel and the Palestinian-American professors Edward Said and Ibrahim Abu Lughod. Two of the intended speakers were unable to attend, for reasons having much to do with the theme of the meeting: Latif Dori had to appear as a defendant in the Anti-Peace Trial (see separate article); and Tawfiq Abu Ghazala, of the Gaza Center for Rights and Law, had to wait several days before the military authorities granted him permission to go abroad.

Aside from New York, I had a brief stay in Chicago, during which I was interviewed by the WBEZ radio station

My tour ended in Washington, where I met with the "Washington Area Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace", and with local members of the AICIPP. My time in Washington was, however, mainly devoted to a series of meetings on Capitol Hill. I met with the staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as with individual aides of senators and representatives. The subjects discussed ranged from the Middle East conflict in general, to the pending "Anti-Terrorist" bill aimed at closing down the PLO offices in the United States. I found that, at times, senators' aides express in private opinions quite different from those advocated in public by their bosses...

Adam Keller

Matti Peled calls upon American legislators to oppose closure of Washington PLO office

On July 29, 1987, Knesset Member Matti Peled sent the following letter to all members of the U.S. Senate. Similar letters were also sent to all members of the House of Representatives.

Dear Senator:

I am writing to you concerning the bill known as "The Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987", which is aimed at closing down the PLO offices in the United States. This is being presented as a "Pro-Israel" bill, and for that reason senators and representatives who consider themselves friends of Israel are being urged to support it.

As a member of the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), I would like to dispute that view. I believe that achieving peace is a prime requirement for Israel's long-term survival and prosperity. There can be no peace without

negotiations between the Israeli government, representing the Israeli people, and the representatives of the Palestinian people. Such representatives can only be chosen by the Palestinians themselves, and on each occasion that the Palestinians were asked for their opinion, they unequivocally expressed their support for the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the PLO. Such, for example, was the result of the 1976 municipal elections on the West Bank, which were the last free elections to be held there. Similar results were the outcome of a public opinion poll, held in the Occupied Territories in August 1986. Indeed, the government of Israel itself, in refusing to permit new municipal elections on the West Bank, admits that, in its view, such elections would be won by supporters of the PLO.

Together with many of my fellow-citizens of Israel, I have been urging the Israeli government to reconsider its policies and to agree to negotiate with the PLO in the context of an international peace conference. Recently this idea has been spreading; not only opposition members such as myself, but also Ezer Weitzmann, member of the Israeli cabinet, as well as several Knesset Members from the Israeli Labor Party, have publicly voiced their support for Israeli negotiations with the PLO.

Passage of the bill closing the PLO offices in the U.S. would, in my view, constitute a grave setback for the Middle East peace process. It would mean total abdication by the U.S. of any role as a mediator in the Middle East conflict. Hardliners in the Israeli cabinet would be encouraged to persist in their intransigent position and their refusal to talk with the PLO. Far from "stopping terrorism", as it is supposed to do, this bill would further escalate the cycle of bloodshed and violence in the Middle East.

Therefore, as an Israeli concerned with the wellbeing of my country and my people, I urge you to voice opposition to this so-called "Anti-Terrorism Act". By so doing, you will not be taking an "anti-Israel" stand; on the contrary, the rejection of this bill will be compatible with the long-term interests of the State of Israel and will be seen as such by a substantial number of Israel's citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Major General (res.) Matti Peled
Member of Knesset

As this issue of The Other Israel was going into print, Peled received the following reply from Congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts:

Dear MK Peled:

I admire your initiative in writing to Members of Congress to urge opposition to the bill which should shut down the PLO offices. As a Member of the House who has been a strong supporter of Israel, I have previously expressed my opposition to this bill (...). It was therefore particularly helpful to me to have someone like yourself write the letter which you did and I'm glad that you did so.

No matter what one's views are on who should negotiate with whom, closing down this office would be a poor idea and I am pleased that you have spoken out against it.

Barney Frank



Matti Peled invited to Yugoslavia

Between July 21-25, 1987, Knesset Member Matti Peled visited Yugoslavia, at the invitation of the ruling Socialist Alliance. He had numerous meetings with Yugoslavian personalities. His official host was Mr. Mirko Ostojic', member of the Presidency of the SAWPY, the League for Peace Among Nations, as well as head of the Socialist Alliance's Foreign Relations Department. Discussions were held between Peled and his hosts on the situation in the Middle East, with special emphasis on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There was full agreement on both sides.

The Yugoslavs expressed great interest in developing closer ties with Israeli peace-seeking groups and individuals, on the basis of a "people to people" relationship. It was made clear that Yugoslavia would not renew diplomatic relations with the government of Israel, as long as the latter had not modified its positions regarding the situation in the Middle East in general, and towards the Palestinian problem in particular. However, twenty years have elapsed since 1967, when diplomatic relations were severed. In this time, the situation in the area has changed to a degree that necessitates a new approach.

Another consideration was that the superpowers might settle global questions sufficiently to subsequently focus their attention on regional problems. This should be accompanied by the parallel efforts of all concerned, in searching for a satisfactory solution on the crisis in the Middle East, which is enduring as the most serious of all regional crises.

Yugoslavia, being committed to the policy of non-alignment and having traditionally played a leading role in the Third World, has a keen interest in seeing the Middle East crisis resolved peacefully and amicably. Yugoslavia considers it essential to solve the Palestinian problem so as to satisfy the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people while guaranteeing the safe existence of Israel. This, in fact, has been Yugoslavia's position all along. Marshall Tito, in his time, had made great efforts to persuade the Arab leaders to adopt this view. Yugoslavia's position is greatly affected by the common historical fate of the Yugoslavian and the Jewish peoples, who together suffered from and fought against Fascism in the Second World War.

Yugoslavia regrets that repeated attempts were made to eliminate the PLO and deplors such attempts, whether made by Israel or by some Arab governments. The PLO is seen as having now clarified its position in favor of a negotiated solution. After the latest PNC (Palestinian National Council) session in Algiers, it is clear that this position is shared by all constituent elements of the PLO—which should be a great encouragement to peace-seeking people everywhere. Clearly, the most appropriate and promising form of a fruitful search for peace would be an international peace conference, as envisaged by the U.N. General

Assembly's resolution, with the active participation of the big powers.

Mr. Ostojic' has invited M. Peled to visit Yugoslavia again in the autumn, with an Israeli delegation representing a wide, peace-loving spectrum of circles. Peled has undertaken to help set up such a delegation.

Other forms of cooperation were explored, which may lead to additional initiatives in order to enhance cooperation between peace-seeking forces in Israel and the people of Yugoslavia.

Principles for coexistence

The Progressive List for Peace (PLP) will hold its first conference on October 23-24, 1987. As part of the preparations for the conference, the PLP Executive adopted the following draft platform, which will be circulated and discussed in the PLP branches and affiliates, preparatory to the conference.

1. The PLP is a voluntary association of Jews and Arabs, Arabs and Jews, citizens and residents of the State of Israel, who have agreed to cooperate, with the aim of working for the attainment of specific political and social objectives, the principal ones being: guaranteeing equality for all citizens of the state, supporting the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel, and achieving peace between all the states of the region.

Invitation

The Progressive List for Peace (PLP) invites all interested parties, groups and organizations to send observers to its first conference, scheduled for October 23-24, 1987. The deliberations will be conducted in Arabic and Hebrew, with English translation. Expenses for all accommodations, including food, housing and transportation at and around the conference will be provided by the PLP.

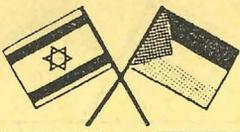
Those who support the aims of the conference and cannot attend it are urged to communicate a message of support and solidarity which will be shared with conference participants.

Those who do attend the conference are also invited to participate in a special two-day study tour in Israel and the occupied territories for an overview of the current socio-political situation. The deadline for reservations is October 5; please also indicate whether you will participate in the study tour.

For further information and to make your reservation, contact one of the following addresses:

Progressive List for Peace: P.O. Box 31109, Tel-Aviv, Israel, or P.O. Box 2472, Nazareth, Israel; or Rev. Canon Riah Abu El-Assal, P.O. Box 75, Nazareth, Israel.

It is possible to contact the PLP at the following numbers: (06)554532 (Nazareth); (03) 659474 (Tel-Aviv); (02) 554554 (Jerusalem); (06) 554017 (Rev. El-Assal); (02) 342940 (KM Matti Peled); (04) 533453 (KM Mohammed Miari); (03) 5565804 (Adam Keller).



2. The State of Israel arose by virtue of the 1947 resolution of the UN General Assembly, which affirmed that mandatory Palestine/Eretz Ysrael was to be partitioned into "a Jewish state" and "an Arab state". The state of Israel came into being in 1948, the Jewish people thereby implementing its right to self-determination. Israel's right to exist is undisputable, like the right of any state anywhere in the world. The Palestinian Arab state is likewise entitled to come into being and exist in peace and security, and this right, too, is undisputable. The Palestinian state has yet to be set up, and it is this assymetry which lies at the root of the conflict.

Just as the Jewish people has exercised its right to self-determination, the Palestinian people is entitled to implement the same right and establish its state alongside the State of Israel, in the territories occupied since 1967. The border between the two states shall be determined on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines,* in negotiations between the authorised delegations of the State of Israel and the Palestinian state. The establishment of a Palestinian state, in which the Palestinian people will implement its right to self-determination, is the firmest guarantee for the continuing existence of the two peoples and their states, for a lasting and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement, and for the affinity of Israel's Arab citizens to the State of Israel, their homeland and only home.

3. The state of Israel belongs to all its citizens – Jews and Arabs, women and men, Oriental and Western Jews, secular and religious. It is up to the state to guarantee complete equality and social justice, in theory and practice, for all its citizens, irrespective of nationality, religion, race, sex, ethnic community or outlook. This principle does not conflict with the state of Israel being "a Jewish state", in keeping with the guiding principles of the UN partition resolution and the Declaration of Independence; or with its being "the state of the Jewish people" in the sense of preservation of the historical and spiritual links of the Jews of Israel with the Jewish people throughout the world.

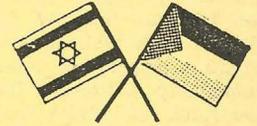
4. The opportunity shall be granted to all currents in the Jewish people's cultural heritage – including that of Oriental Jewry – to contribute to the spiritual and cultural development of the state of Israel. The Oriental Jewish heritage, recovered after a period of disregard and discrimination to which it was subjected in the State of Israel, makes its imprint upon Jewish society. Having been integrated with Arab culture for many generations, the Oriental Jewish heritage is capable of contributing to the creation of understanding and cooperation between the different sections of the Israeli population, Jews and Arabs, and of constituting a bridge of peace between the State of Israel and the Arab peoples.

5. The Arab citizens of Israel constitute a part of the Palestinian people, whose right to self-determination has not been realized; this right will find its expression in the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. Israel's Arab citizens are not only entitled to full civic and legal equality, but also to free expression of their national character, and to preservation of

their national, cultural and religious heritage – as is the right of the Jewish citizens.

6. The PLP believes that the achievement of these objectives conforms with the existence, welfare and prosperity of the State of Israel, as well

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* The 1949 armistice lines remained Israel's borders until the outbreak of war in 1967.



as with ensuring its character as a democratic, pluralist and humanistic state, and with establishing peaceful relations between Israel, the Palestinian people, and the entire Arab world.

7. As long as the Palestinian people has not realized its right to self-determination, and as long as Israel's Arab citizens do not enjoy full and genuine equality, in law and day-to-day practice, the political links of Israel's Palestinian Arab citizens with their state will be prejudiced. This situation perpetuates, among the Palestinian Arab community in Israel, a feeling of alienation from the state. The PLP's involvement in the Israeli political and electoral system reflects its conviction that the State of Israel is the arena in which to strive for its goals; these include the achieving of genuine equality between all Israeli citizens, and the establishing of peace, which will guarantee the just national rights of all the peoples of the region, including Israel and the Palestinian people, whose sole national representative is the PLO. Achievement of these aims will fortify the links between Israel's Palestinian Arab citizens and their state, and establish equality between all its citizens; this will make a decisive contribution to the welfare and prosperity of the State of Israel and of all states in the region.

8. The PLP is not a doctrinaire body, but a political organisation resting upon fundamental progressive and humanistic norms, principally the right of peoples to national liberation and self-determination, and the right of individuals to personal, civic and political liberty and to social justice. The PLP's attitude towards social and political issues, involving either principles or concrete events, shall be determined in accord with these principles. This will be done by an agreed procedure, either at a conference of the Progressive List for Peace, or by bodies duly constituted.

Ghazi Khouri, a man of Peace

At the beginning of August, Ghazi Khouri, the PLO representative in Holland, died at a Hague hospital. Ghazi Khouri was a participant in, and a promoter of the contacts between the PLO and the Israeli peace movement. The following is an excerpt translated from an article published in Ha-Olam Ha-Zeh on August 12, 1987. In it, Uri Avneri describes Ghazi Khouri, a man, a friend, a Palestinian peace fighter.

I have never been so happy to see a man's face as I was on that morning of July 1982, when I saw Ghazi Khouri with his glasses and his moustache.

On the previous night I telephoned from Israeli-held East Beirut, and arranged a meeting with Yasser Arafat. I was told to come, at 10 A.M., to the PLO outpost near the Beirut Museum, at the dividing line between the two halves of Beirut. There, I was to be met by a man known as "Ahmed".

On the appointed hour, I approached the PLO fortifications. I left behind me the soldiers of the Israeli army, its Phalangist allies, and the Lebanese army. In front of me was a high rampart, on which stood

wild-looking youngsters armed with Russian sub-machine guns. I was quite apprehensive, not knowing whether "Ahmed" would indeed show up and how to recognize him. I approached closer—and then I saw Ghazi Khouri's face; the round, smiling face of a man who enjoys living.

I had already known Ghazi Khouri for years, as Issam Sartawi's aide. A Christian from Bethlehem, he was somehow connected with Mayor Elias Freij. Upon joining the PLO he entered Yasser Arafat's personal staff. Later he was assigned to help Sartawi's historic mission of establishing a dialogue with Israelis and with European leaders. When personal problems and quarrels marred the dialogue, Ghazi Khouri was able to find solutions.

In August 1982, the PLO forces had to leave Beirut. Ghazi Khouri, who was not a soldier, stayed behind in order to take care of his sick mother. After the assassination of Bashir Jumayel, Israeli Forces entered West Beirut. Ghazi encountered, at the entrance to his home, the soldiers sent to arrest him. They did not know his face. They asked him for Ghazi Khouri's apartment. He courteously pointed it out, and then went off to the French embassy. From there, he was smuggled to France. When I met him later, he was still very much concerned for his mother and telephoned her every day from Paris.

We have spent many hours together, and I have learned to know him as a person and a friend. We talked much, not only about politics, but also about life in general, the situation of the Palestinians, the future of our two peoples. He was a wise man and very realistic, playing Sancho Pancho to Sartawi's Quichote.

Meanwhile, he was promoted within the PLO's diplomatic structure to the rank of ambassador. Appointed to the office in Holland, he soon acquired many friends there.

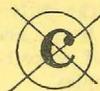
Of course, at the Hague he was also a prime target for Abu-Nidal's assassins, especially after the assassination of Sartawi, when he was charged with organizing the continued dialogue with the Israeli peace forces. He was aware of this danger, and so was I.

Many times, when a friend called me from Holland, I was afraid that I would hear of Khouri's assassination, as I have heard of Said Hammami's and Issam Sartawi's.

This week, the telephone rang, and I heard of his death, but he was not murdered. He died from a liver disease.

This, too, was not a complete surprise. For years, his health was seriously impaired. Sometimes, he tried to joke about it, but he was depressed. I think he felt that his days were numbered.

It gives some consolation that, if Ghazi Khouri had to die, he died in bed.



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