

The Other Israel

Newsletter of the Israeli Council
for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

November-December 1987

No 28/29*

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FROM AMMAN TO GAZA

On November 8, the leaders of the Arab states met in Amman, capital of Jordan. The summit's most important result was a definite warming up of the Arab world's relations with Egypt. This was expressed in a resolution permitting Arab states to renew their diplomatic relations with Cairo, broken off after Camp David. By November 19, the tenth anniversary of President Sadat's memorable visit to Israel, many Arab states have already taken advantage of this possibility.

The renewal of diplomatic ties constitutes a de-facto recognition of the Israeli-Egyptian peace; countries like Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have sent their ambassadors to Cairo, knowing full well that, in the same city, the Israeli flag flies above the Israeli embassy.

Both the outcome of the Amman summit and Yasser Arafat's statements at Geneva and Moscow (see *separate article*) clearly show that Israel can now achieve peace with the Arab world, and in particular with the Palestinians; but no lasting peace is possible as long as Israel maintains its military rule over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Neither Israel's existing peace with Egypt, nor any incipient relations with other Arab states, can long endure while million and a half Palestinians stay under Israeli occupation and while the Palestinian refugees stay in their camps, with no hope for the future. Until due consideration is given to the national rights and aspirations of the Palestinians, they will remain a focus of discontent and rebellion throughout the Middle East, threatening any status quo which disinherits them.

In recent weeks, public attention centered, in particular, on the Gaza Strip – an area which provides an extreme example of the Palestinian plight. It is a narrow strip of land, hemmed in between Israel and Egypt, between the desert and the sea. In 1948 hundreds of thousands of refugees, uprooted from their homes in what became the State of Israel, were added to Gaza's original population. Due also to a high birth-rate, the Gaza Strip became the world's most densely populated area, a concentration of poverty and misery. Since being occupied by Israel in 1967, the Gaza Strip turned into a reservoir of cheap labor for the Israeli economy, tens of thousands of its inhabitants commuting each morning to work in the Israeli cities.

A growing number of the Gaza inhabitants turn, in their misery, to Muslim fundamentalism. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Israeli authorities encouraged this trend, hoping that a clash between religious zealots and secular nationalists will weaken the Palestinian cause. But in recent years, the religious movement grew and its members started to carry out attacks on Israelis. Belatedly, the Israeli army made strong efforts to suppress it. The Islamic university of Gaza was invaded by soldiers; deportation orders were issued against religious leaders; dozens of Muslim activists were rounded up and imprisoned.

In June, six Muslim fundamentalists succeeded in escaping from the Gaza prison, which was rather embarrassing for the authorities. On October 1, one of the escapees was caught at an army check point; he

and two other Palestinians were shot to death. The official statement claimed that the Palestinians were "killed while trying to escape"; detailed research by Israeli journalists exposed contradictions in the government's line, pointing to the possibility that they were shot down in cold blood (Koteret Rashit, October 14, 1987).

Another incident occurred a week later, on October 8. As described in the official communique, Israeli security forces have encountered a suspicious car on a Gaza street; there ensued a battle in which were killed two escaped prisoners, one other Palestinian, and an Israeli security service (Shabak) agent. The other Shabak agents then chased a fourth Palestinian, who – as in the previous incident – was "killed while trying to escape".

Following these two incidents, there was a debate among factions in the military government, regarding whether or not the dead Palestinians' homes should be demolished. Such demolitions, decreed by a military governor without trial, are a normal procedure against "terrorists". Some officials argued that in this case death was punishment enough, and that demolition of the houses would cause riots. At last, however, the hard-liners won. At the end of October the houses were destroyed, leaving the families homeless. Several days of widespread rioting did follow.

Despite all this, the Islamic movement continues to spread among the Gazans, its members drawing inspiration from the newly-created martyrs.

The situation in the overcrowded Gaza Strip became exacerbated

* Sharp-eyed readers may have noticed that the last issue of *The Other Israel* was misnumbered; it should have been 27 and not 28, as was mistakenly printed. We apologise to all who felt that they missed something.

through the introduction of Israeli settlers; a third of the meager Gaza Strip was declared "State Lands", set aside for the use of present and future Jewish settlers. Small in numbers, but well organised, armed and financed by the Israeli government, the settlers have set up vigilante groups. On November 9, settler vigilantes assaulted a demonstration of schoolgirls at Dir-el-Balah, south of Gaza; 17-year old Intisar al-Atar was shot dead. The settlers' leadership immediately started mobilising its considerable political lobby, in order to stop investigation of the girl's killing.

The PLP statement on November 29

On November 29, 1987, the executive of the Progressive List for Peace met in the Arab village of Ara (in the Galilee) and adopted the following resolution:

Forty years ago on this day the U.N. General Assembly decided upon the establishment of two states, a Jewish one and an Arab one, in this land.

The state of Israel was created. The Palestinian state, whose creation was decided upon as well, did not yet arise. It left a gaping void; a void which is filled by wars, bloodshed, hatred and racism. Therefore, this day was declared to be the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and as such it is commemorated by many people around the world.

We say: no peace or quiet are possible, nor will we have any future in this land, until the Arab Palestinian people is allowed to exercise its right to self-determination and to create its own independent state beside the state of Israel.

We, members of the PLP executive, call upon all those who oppose occupation and annexation, racism and discrimination; upon the leaderships of Mapam, Ratz and Hadash; and upon all peace movements and peace seekers, organised and unorganised - to cooperate in an uncompromising struggle for Israeli-Palestinian peace and for full equality to all citizens of Israel. This struggle must be carried out at all levels and in all places, in the Knesset and in the street, in each and every part of the Israeli society.

These events gave rise to a public controversy in Israel; a heated debate took place in the Knesset, and in Tel-Aviv's main street peace demonstrators had a violent confrontation with racist hoodlams.

Taken together, the killing in Gaza and the summit in Amman point out the two courses which are open to the citizens of Israel: the road of occupation and oppression, leading to an endless cycle of fear and hate, violence and bloodshed - or the renunciation of territorial aggrandisement, clearing the way for peaceful coexistence between Israel and its neighbors.

The Editor

P.S. After the above was written, events seemed to underline the sharpness of the dilemma.

On November 26, a single Palestinian fighter, riding a primitive glider, succeeded in penetrating the ground and air defences of Israel's northern border; he carried out a one-man raid on an Israeli army camp, and killed six Israeli soldiers before being killed himself. The attack created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty along Israel's northern border, where previously the inhabitants were led to believe that the Lebanon War had insured "Peace for the Galilee". On the other side of the border, Palestinian refugees tensely prepared for retaliatory air raids.

Tension was increased by the cruel murder of two workers in a Jerusalem supermarket. The police immediately announced that "the murder was probably committed by nationalist Arabs", and all Arab workers of the supermarket were detained, apparently on no other grounds than their nationality.

These were far from propitious conditions for peace activities. Nevertheless, the "Stop the Occupation" movement did hold a long-planned demonstration. On November 29, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, several kilometres of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway were lined by Israeli and Palestinian demonstrators, all united behind the slogan **ISRAEL AND PALESTINE - TWO STATES FOR TWO PEOPLES**.



DIALOGUE AT GENEVA

On September 7, 1987, there opened in the Palais des Nations, at Geneva, the fourth conference of NGO's (non-governmental organizations) on the question of Palestine. This year's meeting, in which thousands of participants from all over the world participated, was the occasion of a significant Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. About fifty Israelis were present, representing diverse parties, groups and currents in the Israeli peace movement. On the Palestinian side, there were several hundred participants, drawn from the Palestinian communities scattered over the Middle East and throughout the world, and headed by PLO chairman Yasser Arafat.

Arafat's speech at the beginning of the conference clearly indicated the PLO's willingness to make peace with Israel, for the first time explicitly accepting resolutions 242 and 338 (see box on page 3).

On the same evening, members of parliaments from different countries, who participated in the conference, met with Arafat. The participants included members of the American, Australian, Austrian and Canadian parliaments, but the most dramatic effect was created by the participation of four members of the Israeli Knesset: Muhammad Miari and Matti Peled of the Progressive List for Peace, Charlie Biton and Tawfik Ziad of the Communist-led Democratic Front for Peace and Equality.

Arafat's speech and his meeting with the Knesset members received wide coverage in the Israeli press. Israeli journalists, present at Geneva, were caught by the spirit of the event; this could be felt in their reporting of it. It is worthwhile to quote, for example, from the account given by Yediot Aharonot, Israel's largest-circulation newspaper:

Direct talks with Israel - that is what Yasser Arafat and the top PLO leadership have repeatedly demanded, throughout the conference's three days. "Israel" has ceased to be a dirty word, which a self-respecting PLO member would not pronounce. (...) In private talks with Israeli journalists, the PLO speakers repeat one main point: "We are willing to discuss all proposals. We are tired of

forty years of war, we want to end it. It is time to sit down and talk about peace. You Israelis will find that we are far more moderate and reasonable than you think."

In public, too, Arafat made far-reaching statements: "When I want to participate in a Peace Conference, it is not in order to talk there with the representatives of the Arab states – it is in order to speak with Israel. I

Arafat's Message

"We insist on convening this International Conference under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of international legality as well as of the international resolutions approved by the United Nations relevant to the Palestinian cause and the Middle East Crisis, and the resolutions of the Security Council including resolutions 242 and 338, in order to put an end to the Israeli occupation in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and other occupied Arab territories, (...) (thus placing) the Palestinian reality (...) in positive interaction with contemporary international reality." (*Quoted from the U.N.'s English translation of the speech, which Arafat delivered at the NGO meeting on September 7.*)

* * *

On November 7, Arafat met in Moscow with a delegation of the Israeli Communist Party, through whom he passed on the following message to the people of Israel:

"The people of Israel must be made to know that you can't simply eliminate five million Palestinians and ignore their national rights, just like you can't get rid of Israel. We must strive for a just solution, for the good of both peoples, and live in peace.

I am striving for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Failure to find such a solution could lead to a local war, which could well escalate into a world war and a nuclear holocaust that would wipe out the human race.

The PLO accepts all the decisions of the UN concerning the conflict, including Resolution 242, an acceptance which we have announced publicly at international conferences. The PLO perceives all these conditions as part of an all-inclusive package, which it accepts in toto, as opposed to the government of Israel which accepts only one decision and rejects all the others. That is a deception." (*Quoted from the Jerusalem Post, 9/11/87.*)

want to negotiate with my enemies – the same enemies against whom I fought for many years – in order to reach a just and comprehensive peace. I hope that the Israeli leaders will listen to me. The idea of peace negotiations, in the framework of an International Conference, now enjoys world-wide support, in the East and in the West. Such an opportunity may not come again; I hope that the Israeli leaders understand this." (Edwin Eytan in *Yediot Aharonot*, September 10).

Sadly – though predictably – the Israeli decision-makers gave no positive response to Arafat's challenge. Prime Minister Shamir and Foreign Minister Peres vied with each other in dismissing Arafat's initiative as "bluff", "tricks" and "nothing new". Unfortunately, this campaign was helped by a chain of events involving K.M. Charlie Biton.

A day after the four K.M.s met with Arafat, K.M. Biton had another meeting with the PLO chairman. Afterwards, Biton claimed to have received a personal message from Arafat to the Israeli government. Moreover, some of Biton's supporters let it be understood in the press that Arafat was willing to give up altogether the idea of an International Peace Conference, as a framework for negotiations with Israel.

After several days it was revealed that Biton had no specific message, beyond the message of peace which Arafat gave, in public and private, to all who heard him. It is still hotly debated whether Biton and his fellows made an honest mistake or deliberately misrepresented Arafat's words. In any case, the publication of the rumors about the PLO's supposed shift aroused strong criticism in several Arab countries, particularly in Jordan; support for the International Conference is a basic principle accepted both by all PLO factions and by the entire Arab World. Therefore, the PLO felt obliged to issue a statement denying that it had departed from this position. This denial, in turn, was gleefully picked up by the Israeli government, which distorted it in order to discredit both the peace movement and Arafat's initiative. It was presented as a denial of Arafat's entire message of peace, which it certainly wasn't. Shimon Peres stated: "Why should we react to Arafat's message, when he already denied it?"

Nevertheless, Biton's venture did

have one beneficial effect. When Biton arrived in Israel, he called upon Shimon Peres and Yitzchak Shamir to receive him and hear about Arafat's message. Both Shamir and Peres send their aides to hear Biton; though their meetings were short and without any practical result, the very fact that they took place was widely regarded as an infraction of the taboo on contacts with the PLO. It was the extreme-right Tehiyah party which helped drive this point home, repeatedly chiding Shamir for his willingness to hear Arafat's message. The Tehiyah then proceeded to invoke the Anti-Peace Law, which forbids Israelis from contacts with PLO representatives; in the Tehiyah's interpretation, an Israeli who brings a message from Arafat thereby himself becomes a "PLO representative". Thus, the Tehiyah argued, all Israelis who met Biton – including the aides of the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister – should be put on trial... By offering this to the Israeli public, the Tehiyah unwittingly helped to demonstrate the absurdity of the anti-Peace Law.

* * *

After the Israeli participants returned from Geneva, the police started a long series of investigations and interrogations. First, the four Knesset members were cordially invited to police headquarters; then the police started to work its way through the rest of the fifty participants. Many of these refused to answer the police's questions, stating for the record: *This is not a proper criminal investigation, but a politically-motivated harassment by the police.*

The police certainly had its hands full: Haim Hanegbi, Parliamentary Secretary of the PLP, was interrogated twice – once about his participation in the Geneva conference, the other about his meeting in Paris with the Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish (*see issue 28*). At the same time the police interrogated Adv. Kamel Daher of Nazareth, a PLP member who was unable to go to Geneva since the Interior Minister forbade him to go abroad. Daher was accused of having written an "inciting article" in a newspaper*.

So far, no charges were brought against any participants of the Geneva conference. In a press conference held on September 23, police commissioner David Kraus

complained that senior officials are not cooperative on this matter. The text of the Anti-Peace Law requires, for an offence to be committed, that the forbidden meeting be conducted "without authorization". Therefore, the police needs a government official's statement that no authorization was given. Such statements are not easily forthcoming. From Kraus' hints it seems that certain Foreign Ministry officials are not so eager to see the Anti-Peace Law implemented.

It may be that the police is waiting for the results of the Anti-Peace Trial, in which four Israelis are accused of having met PLO members in Romania. (One of the four, Latif Dori, who had also been in Geneva, was again interrogated by the police.) This trial is still going on at Ramleh Court; the prosecution concluded presenting its case by bringing as witnesses several journalists who had covered the Romania meeting. Some of them, however, refused to testify; others testified under protest, stating that they came to Romania in order to provide information to the public, and not in order to become witnesses in a political trial.

** In the article, Daher stated that international law recognises the right of peoples under foreign occupation to resist, and that this applies to the Palestinian people as to others.*

THE REAL MESSAGE OF GENEVA

Now that the smokescreen of M.K. Charlie Biton's non-existent "message" has dissolved, it might be worthwhile to consider the true political message which emerged from the NGO meeting in Geneva. Outwardly, the Israeli government paid little attention to the Geneva conference. I have, however, little doubt that every word spoken there was thoroughly studied and analysed at the top echelons of Israel's two co-ruling parties, Labor and Likud.

The Israeli government's pretence that nothing remarkable took place at Geneva has a tragic precedent. In February 1971, President Sadat of Egypt informed U.N. mediator Gunnar Jarring of his willingness to make peace with Israel. Though Sadat's conditions were quite

reasonable, the Israeli government, then headed by Golda Meir, had no intention of accepting them. Therefore, the government pretended to see nothing significant in Sadat's proposal. Six years later Sadat, in his historic speech on the Knesset floor, said that Israeli-Egyptian peace could have already been achieved in 1971, had Israel listened to his message. In that case the Yom Kippur War, with all its pain and bloodshed, would have been avoided.

Like its predecessor in 1971, today's Israeli government pretends that the message from Geneva does not exist – though, in fact, its nature and importance are very clear. Among the many interesting speeches delivered in Geneva, there were two – the one by Yasser Arafat and the one by the Soviet representative Vinogradov – containing political statements of prime importance.

Arafat's speech contained three significant elements. First, Arafat made clear that he was speaking with the Palestinian national consensus behind him, due to the PLO reunification, achieved at the 18th session of the PNC (Palestinian National Council) in Algiers. This is important, considering the scorn which Israeli officials poured on the resolutions of the 17th PNC in Amman, which were adopted in the absence of the radical PLO factions. At the time the government propagandists never tired of asking: "Whom does Arafat represent? In the name of which PLO does he speak?" Now, when Arafat is repeating principles formulated at Amman, he does it with greater force, in the name of a unified PLO.

A second major element was Arafat's statement that he accepts all U.N. resolutions relevant to the Palestinian problem, including those which he opposed at the time they were adopted. At the PNC session in Amman, Arafat made a similar statement without mentioning resolutions 242 and 338 specifically. Now, at Geneva, he did explicitly mention the two "shibboleth" resolutions. (By so doing, Arafat flung a challenge to Israeli Minister Ezer Weitzman, who had expressed his willingness to meet Arafat should the latter accept the two resolutions.) Of no less significance was Arafat's reference to the U.N. resolution on the partition of Palestine of 1947. Though he called the day on which it was adopted "a black day", he nevertheless accepted it as part of

the principle of "international legality"*. The historical significance of this becomes clear when we remember that Israel's Declaration of Independence is prefaced with thanks to the U.N. for adopting this resolution, a resolution which was, for decades, fiercely opposed by the Arab World.

It was claimed that Arafat's reference to the 1947 resolution implies that he demands an Israeli withdrawal to the narrow borders envisaged in 1947. However, this claim is baseless: Arafat's acceptance of the partition resolution, in conjunction with resolution 242, proves that what Arafat accepts is the principle of the partition of Palestine, not the specific borders proposed in 1947.

A third significant element in Arafat's speech was the emphasis on the central role of the International Peace Conference as a means of achieving peace in the Middle East, and his acceptance of the idea of a "preparatory committee", which was included in the resolution adopted by the U.N. General Assembly.

The importance of such a preparatory committee was underlined by the Soviet speaker at Geneva – Vladimir Vinogradov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Soviet Federal Republic. Vinogradov stated that a preparatory committee will make it possible to discuss, in advance, both the procedures and the substance of the International Conference. This preparatory work could, according to Vinogradov, proceed in different ways – either in bi-lateral discussions or in multilateral ones. Once the preparatory committee's work ends, the International Conference should be convened and conducted entirely on a multilateral basis; this, because the problems to be discussed by the conference are of such a nature that their solution requires the agreement of all parties to the conflict. There can be little doubt that this Soviet position is also acceptable to Arafat.

In conclusion it can be said that the Israeli government, in its words and actions, is sending a message of its own to the world: that it is determined to perpetuate its rule over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Little wonder that the government is unwilling to admit the existence of the message from Geneva – or indeed, of any message capable of serving as fruitful basis for negotiations. Nevertheless, whether or not the government is

ready to accept it, the message of peace is there – as it was in 1971 – and its contents are open to all who wish to see. Hopefully, this time a smaller price will have to be paid before the government sees it as well.

Matti Peled

** In the name of this principle of "international legality", President Bourguiba of Tunisia called upon the Arab World already in 1965 to recognise Israel. This proposal was rejected at the time, but in 1982 it was accepted by the Arab countries at the Fez Summit.*

NEW TRENDS

Some interesting developments have recently occurred in Israel with regard to relations with the PLO. They are connected to the NGO's conference in Geneva. True, Arafat's firm but conciliatory speech has been built on elements already used by him previously on different occasions, but it was the first time that Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 were mentioned explicitly. More important, what were called "personal messages" by the PLO chairman to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir and Foreign Minister Peres compelled the two leaders of Israel's major parties to send official envoys to the messenger, M.K. Charlie Biton, to accept those messages. All this did not prevent Israel's main political parties from continuing to reject talks with the PLO, but it helped to make such political contacts more legitimate in the eyes of the Israeli public.

The continued rejection of any possibility of negotiations with the PLO has nothing to do with the official reasons given, but has its roots in the simple desire not to give up the lands which Israel occupies since 1967. The Labor Party continues to support the option of an understanding with King Hussein of Jordan, assuming that in that case only minor territories will have to be relinquished by Israel. The Likud is more realistic: its leaders understand that, even when the partner is Jordan and not the PLO, Israeli occupation would have to be terminated in most of the occupied territory. Therefore, the Likud continues to oppose an International Peace Conference altogether.

However, beneath the surface important changes are taking place in Israeli political thinking, though for the time being without leading to concrete political conclusions. Inside the Labor Party the notion prevails that there is no military solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that therefore, sooner or later, a political solution will be inevitable. In the Likud, there is growing unrest over the so-called "demographic problem". This term refers to the continuous shift of the ethnic proportions which, given the higher Arab birth-rate and the absence of any serious Jewish immigration, will lead within a few decades to numerical equality between Jews and Palestinians in the territory now under Israeli rule. The notion that time is not working in favour of annexation more and more dominates political thinking in the Likud*.

Some Likud leaders, such as Deputy Defence Minister Dekel, adopted the idea of "transfer", a massive deportation of Arabs, as the solution for the "demographic problem". Other Likud members, however, are driven by the same "problem" in an opposite direction. Aryeh Na'or, who served as Cabinet Secretary in Begin's time, was expelled from Likud after he expressed support for Peres' idea of an International Peace Conference. Then came the Amirav scandal.

Moshe Amirav is a middle-ranking Likud member who held contacts with PLO sympathisers in East Jerusalem and tried to arrange a meeting with PLO chairman Arafat. Unlike Na'or, Amirav has not been expelled from his party, apparently because he had acted with the backing of several Herut Knesset Members and possibly also with Prime Minister Shamir's knowledge – though all these denied being involved. The whole affair is bound, in the long run, to have a major impact upon the legitimization of contacts with the PLO in the eyes of the Israeli public.

Finally, one has to note what is going on among protagonists outside Israel. After the last meeting of Shimon Peres with the Soviet Foreign Minister in New York, the Labor leader tried to convey the idea that a change in the Soviet policy had occurred and that the USSR is no longer insisting on PLO representation in the International Conference on the Middle East.

In fact, it quickly turned out that the Soviet policy is probably working

towards the establishment of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian or even a common Arab delegation in such a conference. Despite all intra-Arab disputes, some kind of a joint delegation may be the best possibility for the conference really to come about. "We shall not be more Palestinian than the Palestinians," two high Soviet officials are said to have declared on two different occasions.

It seems that, while insisting on the Palestinian right to self-determination, the Soviets leave the choice of the ways and means to achieve that goal exclusively to the Palestinian national movement. That would be a wise course for the Israeli peace movement as well.

Israel Loeff

** It is interesting to note that high ranking PLO officials have recently also used this argument – that time is working in favor of the Palestinian cause, due to the demographic changes inside Palestine.*

AMIRAV AND THE LIKUD DISSIDENTS

At the end of September, Israeli newspaper readers were presented with a startling piece of news: it was revealed that Likud member Moshe Amirav had, since July, held repeated meetings with Palestinian leaders on the West Bank supporting the PLO, that his avowed purpose was to work for peace between Israel and the PLO, and that he hoped to make the Likud an active partner in achieving such peace. Amirav had established these contacts through the mediation of David Ish-Shalom, a peace activist who was present in the meetings of Israelis with the PLO in Romania and Hungary, as well as in the meeting with Arafat in Geneva. The news about Amirav's initiatives came as quite a surprise for Israelis of all political shades and hues. Such actions were, seemingly, the last thing to be expected from a man like Amirav, a member of the council of the Herut party, hardcore of the nationalist Likud block.

The premature disclosure caused a great deal of harm. Amirav came under attack from outraged Herut hard-liners. Sari Nuseibeh, one of

Amirav's main interlocutors, was assaulted by hooded youngsters at Bir-Zeit University, where he teaches, and had to be hospitalized. Already before that, Defence Minister Rabin had signed an administrative detention order against Feisal Husseini, the day after Husseini had met Amirav. It is widely assumed that Rabin, a member of the Labor Party, deliberately sought to sabotage the Likud's incipient venture into peace-making.

Meanwhile Amirav came under growing pressure; Likud Knesset members, who had previously supported him, now publicly dissociated themselves; thugs came to his home and threatened him; at last, he was forced to sign a humiliating recantation. For a time, it seemed that the whole episode ended at naught. However, Amirav persisted in spreading his heretical views. He apparently still enjoys some support at the party's top echelons. Thanks to this, attempts by hard-liners to expel him from the Herut party have, so far, failed.

Moreover, new Likud dissidents started to appear. Shmuel Presburger, a reserve colonel and, like Amirav, a member of the Herut council, gave an interview to the magazine *Al-Bayader As-Siasi* in East Jerusalem, known for its PLO sympathies. In the interview, published on October 31, Presburger stated: *"We have only one partner for peace negotiations - the Palestinians. Sooner or later there will have to be talks, in one way or another, with people who support the PLO line."*

On October 4, Amirav, Presburger and other members of the Herut Council met and officially established a faction under the name "Forum for Discussion of the Problems of Peace".

In their debates inside the Herut party, the dissidents greatly rely on quotations from the writings of Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, revered as the party's Founding Father. Jabotinsky, who died in 1940, was a complex character. A radical nationalist, who dreamt of a "Greater Israel" stretching from the Mediterranean to the borders of Iraq, Jabotinsky still regarded himself as a Liberal. He was one of the first Zionist leaders to perceive that the Palestinians are a people, with their own national consciousness. In Jabotinsky's writings there are many statements concerning the fair treatment which should be given to the Arabs. There is no telling what

Jabotinsky would have said today, had he been alive; the fact is, however, that these statements are there, in writings which have in Herut the status of Holy Writ.

Another source which is quoted for legitimization of a peace discussion inside Herut is the ambiguous Autonomy Plan of the Camp David Accords. As interpreted at the time by the Begin government, "autonomy" was nothing but a thin disguise for continuation of the occupation, and as such was unanimously rejected by the Palestinians. Amirav and his fellows, however, give it substantially different interpretations. The Begin government claimed that, even under "autonomy", Israel would control internal security in the West Bank and Gaza, and that the Israeli security services would continue to have the right to carry out arrests. Nachshon Zada, a member of the new group, presented an autonomy plan in which internal security would be in the hands of the PLO (Kol Ha'ir, 6/11/87).

It is not yet clear how big a following the Likud dissidents have. They deserve respect for their courage in raising the banner of peace inside the stronghold of annexationism. Only time will show whether they are the harbingers of a far-reaching change, which may overturn the balance of Israeli politics.

THE MIARI CASE WON

Regular readers of *The Other Israel* will recall that, in 1985, the Knesset restricted the parliamentary immunity of Knesset Member Muhammad Miari (Progressive List for Peace). The move against Miari was an example of the Israeli establishment's policy of "counterbalancing", which requires that every measure against the racist extreme-right be "balanced" by a similar measure against peace activists and/or Arabs. The immunity of the arch-racist KM Meir Kahane was limited, in order to stop him from conducting provocative "visits" to Arab towns and villages. Therefore, something had to be found against the PLP's Arab Knesset Member.

Miari was presented with a demand to issue a statement condemning "PLO terrorism". He

replied that he condemns any terrorist act which harms civilians, whether committed by Arabs or by Israelis. This was judged "insufficient" by the Knesset majority, which proceeded to remove his immunity (*see issue no. 15*).

Shortly afterwards the PLP, represented by Adv. Yosef Bard, presented an appeal to the Supreme Court against the Knesset decision. It was heard by a special bench of five judges, a number reserved for cases of special importance.

For more than two years, the judges deliberated over the case. They were concerned, not only with the decision against Miari in itself, but also with a fundamental constitutional problem: Does the Supreme Court have the power to overturn a resolution of the Knesset plenum?*

In the 157-page judgement, published on October 11, 1987, the judges answered this question in the affirmative; they ruled that, in removing parliamentary immunity from one of its members, the Knesset performs a semi-judicial function, which is subject to judicial scrutiny. They then overturned the Knesset's anti-Miari decision, ruling that, in order to deprive a Knesset member of his immunity, material evidence is needed of his intention to misuse the immunity. In the Miari case, such evidence was totally lacking.

In Israeli constitutional history, the Miari case will be remembered as a landmark precedent, which established the Supreme Court's right to overrule the Knesset.

** Israel has no written constitution which could serve as a basis for a judicial review of Knesset acts.*

STRUGGLE AT ACRE

As in previous years the Acre Alternative Theatre Festival, which took place in October, featured many plays with political themes. For example, "The Gazans" described the situation of Palestinian workers from Gaza, whose life in Tel-Aviv is characterised by exploitation and hardship. The Festival's political tone clearly reflected the fact that most of Israel's young playwrights and actors support the peace movement.

For the first time since the yearly

events at Acre started, the festival encountered right-wing violence. During the opening ceremony a group, headed by the Likud deputy mayor of Acre, broke in and demanded that the festival be stopped. On following days, members of the Likud, the Tehiyah, the National Religious Party and Kahane's "Kach" movement repeatedly attempted to disrupt the presentation of plays. The right-wing violence centered especially on the performance of the Palestinian "Al-Hakawati" theatre of East-Jerusalem. Before the players could start, dozens of racist thugs, shouting "Arabs out!" had to be evicted from the hall.

Defence against the violence was mainly conducted by the festival's organisers, with help of the spectators. The large police forces that were present did little to stop the attackers; indeed, some Arabs from the audience were arrested and when the festival's director protested, he was detained as well... Notwithstanding all right-wing provocations the show went on and all the plays were presented on schedule.

'Dear Minister Rabin'

On September 28, 1987, a group of sixteen highschool pupils sent the following letter to Defence Minister Rabin:

Dear Mr. Defence Minister

We, Israeli youths who are about to be drafted, regard Israeli rule over the occupied territories as an obstacle to peace and a danger to the future of democracy and of Israeli society. All of us were born after 1967, we have been born into a reality which turns the Israeli Defence Forces from a defence army into an army of occupation and oppression.

We regard service in the Israeli Defence Forces as vitally important. Therefore, we call upon you, Mr. Defence Minister, to allow us to perform our military service within the "green line" (Israel's pre-'67 border), and not require us to participate in acts of occupation and oppression in the territories. We would be unable to participate in such acts, which contravene the dictates of our conscience.

If we are ordered to take part in acts

of oppression, we will have no choice but to refuse.

Publication of the letter caused strong reactions. The Tehiyah party made an attempt to organise a counter-group of "patriotic youth". Condemnation of the refusers was not limited to the right. The leaders of Mapam's youth movement stated: *We, too, are against the occupation, but soldiers must obey orders!* However, among rank-and-file members of this youth movement sympathy with the group was expressed. Through the debate and struggle in the schools, the number of signatories actually increased. The "Group of Sixteen" was particularly successful at the Acre Theatre Festival (see sep. article), where they found dozens of new adherents. At the time of writing, 65 youths have already signed the letter.

In the meantime, three of the signatories have been drafted. So far, the army authorities avoided a confrontation. The three were all placed in units stationed within Israel's pre-'67 borders. Several others are to be drafted in the coming month.

The pupils' group can be contacted at: P.O.B. 33847, Tel-Aviv 61338, Israel.

Washington PLO Office

- continued debate -

In the last issue of *The Other Israel*, we published K.M. Matti Peled's letter to the members of the U.S. Congress, calling upon them to oppose the closure of the PLO offices in Washington and New York. The letter gained much publicity. It was published in the *Washington Post*, which also published several "pro and con" letters in response; representative Nick Joe Rahall II read it on the floor at the House of Representatives.

Despite the opposition voiced by many American groups, the Washington Palestine Information Office was closed by Secretary of State Schultz. Debate continues over the fate of the PLO's New York office, whose closure would violate the U.S.

government's treaty with the United Nations.

The following is a part of the correspondence exchanged between M.K. Matti Peled and members of the U.S. Congress.

August 28, 1987

Dear Mr. Peled:

I have your letter regarding the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987 and its relation to the closing of the PLO offices in the United States. Your strong objection to this is noted, and I respect you for your position, though I disagree. Along with our State Department, I am shocked at the PLO's decision at a recent conference in Algeria to put Abu Abbas back on its Executive Board. The United States has sought the extradition of Mr. Abbas, as you well know, for the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship in October 1985 and the resulting murder. We lost an American on that ship and there was no reason. This outrageous terrorism by Mr. Abbas, recognized by the PLO, is enough to count the PLO out of any real negotiations in the Middle East until they renounce such activity and help bring Mr. Abbas to trial. Your involvement may be able to do that and, if that were brought about, I would certainly reconsider.

(...) My best wishes.

Sincerely,
Dennis DeConcini,
United States Senator

October 23, 1987

Dear Senator

(...) The election of Abu Abbas to the PLO executive indicates that the anti-peace elements in the PLO, though considerably weakened, have not been eliminated. Therefore, when considering the question of the PLO office in Washington or New York, we should ask ourselves the following question: which side would gain by eliminating this office? Would it encourage the forces seeking a negotiated solution or would it encourage those opposing it? It is so easy to imagine Abu Abbas arguing now that his opponents - those who believe in a negotiated solution rather than, like himself, in total reliance on violent struggle - have, once more, been proven wrong in adhering to their dreams of ever making peace with the enemy.

Unfortunately, the adverse results of that ill-advised decision have

already emerged. When Secretary Schulz came to Jerusalem and wanted to meet Palestinian leaders, they refused to see him. Their argument was that they would not meet or talk with the man responsible for thwarting their efforts to encourage the Palestinian peace-seeking forces. I know these gentlemen personally, and I know their courage and dedication. I urge you, dear Senator, not to trust the story that they were intimidated by the PLO into refusing to meet Mr. Schulz. These individuals have proved their integrity more than once in their troubled lives. But they regard themselves now as the victims of those who argue, wrongly, that the peace-seeking Palestinians should be penalized for the acts of their opponents – acts which they condemn in no uncertain terms. Closing the PLO office in Washington penalized them, not Abu Abbas. And I can assure you, Mr. Senator, that in the internal struggle waged constantly inside the PLO, your decision was an important encouragement to those you would like to see weakened. (...)

Sincerely,
Mattityahu Peled,
Member of the Knesset.

TORTURE LEGITIMIZED

In October 1987, the Judicial Commission of Inquiry, headed by former Supreme Court judge Moshe Landau, presented its long awaited report.

To understand the circumstances which gave birth to this report, it is necessary to briefly recapitulate the Nafso affair, in whose wake the Landau commission was formed (see issue 26).

In 1979 Izat Nafso, an officer of the Israeli army, was arrested and (falsely) accused of treason. The "Shabak" (General Security Service) extorted a confession from Nafso, who is a member of a small non-Jewish ethnic group, the Circassians. At court, the Shabak men testified that Nafso had confessed of his own free will and were believed by the judges. Only after seven years of imprisonment did Nafso succeed in proving his innocence on most counts. The Supreme Court overturned his conviction, ruling that the confession

was extorted from him by force and explicitly stating that the Shabak agents had committed perjury. Those, faced with criminal proceedings, threatened to show that their way of interrogating Nafso was according to the normal procedure, thus implicating the entire Shabak.

The government then decided to appoint a judicial commission of inquiry – the Landau commission – in order to investigate the Shabak's methods of interrogation. This decision surprised many in Israel: in the past, Israeli governments have been very reluctant to form such commissions; strong public pressure was usually needed to make them do so. In 1983, the report of the Kahan commission, which investigated the Sabra and Shatila massacres, forced Ariel Sharon to resign from the Defence Ministry. However, after the Landau commission presented its report, the government's intentions in establishing it could be guessed.

The Landau commission consisted of three members, one of whom was Yitzhak Hofi, a former director of the Mossad, the Shabak's sister agency*; he clearly represents the interests of the "intelligence community". A second member was state comptroller Ya'akov Maltz, a former judge known for his Likud sympathies. It was, however, the third member – former Supreme Court Judge Moshe Landau, president of the commission – who received the most public attention. After a long and distinguished career, Landau enjoyed a good reputation as a liberal judge, who has opposed police brutality and tried to curb the use of violence in the interrogation of criminals. However with the publication of the Landau commission's report it became clear that Landau's liberalism has well-defined limits; that for him human rights take second place to *raisons d'état* such as "the struggle against terrorism".

The Landau report deals with two areas of activity by the Shabak: 1) the interrogation of prisoners, and 2) the testimonies given by Shabak operatives in the subsequent trials of these prisoners. The first section begins with a long discussion of the PLO, indiscriminately identifying it, its affiliates and all its sympathizers as "terrorists bent on the destruction of Israel".

Furthermore, the term "terrorist" is defined so as to include not only those who carry out armed attacks on civilians, but also those who attack soldiers and even those who

are engaged in "subversive political activity". According to the commission, such activity – for example, the activity of Palestinian nationalist student organizations or trade unions – is but the first stage of the "terrorists's" career. The commission concludes that since "terrorists" do not confess of their own free will, it is sometimes necessary, in order to extract information or confessions from them, to use what the commission calls "moderate physical pressure". Such "pressure", the commission argues, is not equivalent to torture; the commission has drawn up a detailed manual, in which are listed the "legitimate" and the "forbidden" methods of "putting physical pressure" on interrogated prisoners. This manual, however, is kept secret: none but ministers and members of a small parliamentary sub-committee have been allowed to see it.

In justifying the use of "physical pressure" the commission relied on obscure and ambiguous articles of the Israeli criminal code; it also quoted extensively British precedents regarding the treatment of prisoners in Northern Ireland, and statements by British officials who justified what the British authorities in Ireland term "interrogation in depth".

The other section of the Landau commission's report deals with the conduct of Shabak interrogators in the courts. The report contains a startling revelation: for 16 years, ever since 1971, the Shabak operatives appearing in the trials of Palestinians systematically lied; each time, they testified under oath that the accused had confessed of his own free will, knowing the truth to be otherwise; each and every time, the judges accepted these testimonies, admitted the confessions as evidence, and convicted the accused by this evidence.

The commission condemned this practice, which had become an institutionalised norm. It suggested a remedy – namely, that the use of "physical pressure" be officially recognised and permitted, so that in future the Shabak agents will no longer need to lie, but will be able to tell the court exactly how the confessions were obtained. Regarding the past, the commission stated that the Shabak operatives have indeed committed perjury – a crime punishable by seven years' imprisonment. However, the commission takes into account "that they did so under their superiors' orders

and that they believed these orders to be legal"; also, the commission remarks that there exists but a small corps of skilled interrogators, not easily replaced, and that, should they be put on trial and broken, the "struggle against terrorism" will be severely damaged. Therefore, the commission recommended that no Shabak operatives be put on trial, that the present interrogators be maintained at their jobs, and that the state content itself with the Shabak's promise to refrain, in future, from perjury.

Public reactions to the Landau report followed fairly predictable lines. Liberal newspapers and speakers of the peace movement strongly condemned it; the nationalist right, which had initially opposed any investigation of the Shabak, vocally supported its conclusions.

The cabinet hastened to adopt the Landau recommendations, the main one of which was to stop the criminal proceedings against the perjuring Shabak operatives. Both the Labor Party leadership and its Likud partners are deeply implicated in the Shabak's activities. It is to the interest of both that there will be no further probing into these shadowy areas.

But Pandora's box refused to close: less than two weeks after the publication of the Landau report, a new Shabak affair burst out...

On the night of July 19, 1987, Israeli Security Forces arrived at a house in Raman village, in the northern part of the West Bank. Awad Hamdan, a 23-years old student, was detained on suspicion of "being a member of a hostile organization" (that is, of the PLO). Three days later, on July 22, his family was informed that he had died in the Afula hospital of a heart-attack. However, on arrival at the hospital, the family found no trace of his body. Approaching the military governor of their village, family members were told that Hamdan had died of a snake-bite! Meanwhile, his body was taken to the Abu-Kabir Pathological Institute in Tel-Aviv. After several weeks of waiting, the family was informed that his death had been caused by pneumonia.

When finally the body was delivered, family members found it covered with traces of heavy beating, especially on the head and in the genital area.

Adv. Felicia Langer, representing the family, appealed to the Supreme

Court, to make it order an investigation of the circumstances of Hamdan's death; she also approached the Landau commission, which was sitting at the time, asking it to include the Hamdan case in its investigations. The commission did ask the Shabak for information, and was provided with an internal Shabak document on the interrogation of Hamdan, with which it was satisfied. A few days after the Landau commission presented its report, it was discovered that this document contained false information. What this information was, and in what way it was false, has, so far, not been revealed.

The government, faced with this new shattering revelation, acted swiftly to minimise the damage. The official line is that three Shabak operatives, Hamdan's interrogators, have acted on their own initiative; that they lied to their superiors; and that the Shabak's director had them suspended, pending an investigation of the whole affair.

Thus, a new investigation of the Shabak is about to commence - by the police this time. Judging from the convoluted history of the various Shabak affairs in the last three years, there can be little doubt that this investigation will encounter some difficulties - that is, if the investigators will make any real effort to investigate. But the last three years also have shown that, in spite of all attempts to cover them up, there is a continuing stream of Shabak scandals coming to light.

** The Shabak is mainly concerned with security matters in Israel and the occupied territories; the Mossad is in charge of "intelligence gathering and covert activities" in places not under Israeli rule.*

WHO MURDERED DANNY KATZ?

One of the most important implications of the Landau report is its confirmation of the fact that the Shabak was in the habit of lying in court about the way in which confessions were extracted from Palestinian prisoners. At least in theory, any Palestinian convicted on the basis of such testimonies can now demand a re-trial; apparently, some such test cases will soon be

initiated.

It seems that, in this connection, renewed public attention will be drawn to one of the darkest affairs in Israeli history: the Danny Katz murder.

In 1983, the murdered body of Danny Katz, a 16-year old boy from Haifa, was found in a cave. Long before any suspects were arrested, the assumption spread among the Jewish public, incited by almost the whole press, that the murderers were Arabs. After several months, five Arabs were arrested and signed confessions after a police interrogation. At their trial, they claimed that the confessions were extorted from them by torture; the court, however, rejected this plea and convicted them on the basis of the confessions. The trial, which received large coverage in the Israeli media, became the focus of an intense anti-Arab racist campaign. Rabbi Meir Kahane and his followers were constantly present in the courtroom. Knesset member Meir Cohen-Amidov of the Likud tried to assault the accused shouting: "I'll gouge out your eyes and tear out your guts, you murderers!" Later, on the Knesset floor, he proposed to reintroduce capital punishment "for murderers like those of Danny Katz" offering to act personally as their hangman.

Research done by Haifa University sociologists has shown that, more than any other single event, the publicity around the Danny Katz murder was responsible for instilling anti-Arab prejudices in the minds of Israeli children and youths; many of them still suffer recurring nightmares about "being murdered by the Arabs, as Danny Katz was murdered".

The Danny Katz murder trial left many disquieting questions, summed up by Tom Segev in Ha'aretz:

The court was least of all concerned with the question of the motive; it took for granted that Arabs, because of being Arabs, may desire to kidnap and kill Jewish boys. Though the court determined that the motive was political, it also convicted four of the five of having performed homosexual acts upon the dead body, after having murdered the boy...Necrophilia is a very rare sexual perversion. If the court's verdict is to be believed, no less than four necrophils, all of whom happened to be Arabs, all of them Jew-haters to the point of murdering children, and all of them homosexuals as well, just happened to meet on Mount Carmel on the eve of the

murder. By the way, no traces of semen were found on the body" (Ha'aretz, 6/11/87).

In the wake of recent affairs, the conduct of the Danny Katz murder trial, and the court's confidence in the written confessions of the accused, are thrown into redoubled doubt. The five Arabs have now appealed to the Supreme Court, and Avigdor Feldman – the young lawyer who gained world-wide fame for his spirited defence of Mordechai Vanunu – has agreed to take up the case.

The struggle for the slums

The slum neighborhoods of Israel's cities, inhabited mainly by Sephardis (Oriental Jews), play an extremely important role in shaping the future of Israel. Seething with discontent and resentment over decades of neglect, they are an easy target for Kahane and other racist leaders, who are constantly at work, trying to exploit the impoverished population's frustrations. In recent years the struggle against them is being taken up by Sephardi peace activists. Illuminating this struggle is the following interview with Moti Abu, coordinator of the "Shahar" youth movement. The interview was translated, by the permission of its editor, from "Hamemad Hashlishi", organ of the "East for Peace" movement.¹

During his studies in Tel-Aviv University, Moti Abu joined "University 25", a group of militant Oriental Jewish students. Through "University 25", he became active in Hatikva Quarter of Tel-Aviv, a large slum neighborhood which is a traditional stronghold of the right-wing Likud Block.

Two years ago, Abu took a leading part in forming the "Shahar" ("Dawn") youth movement. Its originators were young slum activists who wanted to create an alternative to the established youth movements, which are not attractive to the slum youth.

Originally, Shahar received financial assistance from the Tel-Aviv municipality and from the governmental "slum eradication project". However, the establishment soon realised that the organisers aim at creating an independent body, based on the slums, which would give the

local youths' needs priority over the education ministry's "youth movement program".

The Tel-Aviv municipality started a campaign against Shahar and all financial assistance was cut off. At present, Shahar operates on a very limited budget.

"We work from below" says Moti Abu. "We take passive and sleepy people and make them aware of their rights. Only then can we talk to them about the left's wonderful ideas. When I came to this neighborhood, people here were close to the views of the racist Kahane. Through working on the theme of equality and of the worth of a human being, we reached the point where we could start discussions about the way Arabs are treated (see box).

We ask questions such as: To whom do you feel closer, to an ultra-Orthodox Jew living in New York, or to an Arab living in your own country? In such ways we try to raise the youths' consciousness. We try to show them that the state is an instrument and does not constitute a value in itself.

When I studied in the Tel-Aviv University, I was in the student left. I told my Ashkenazi comrades that I defined myself as an Arab Jew. Even these leftists were shocked that I dared to define myself in this way. For me, becoming integrated in the East, in the Orient², means more than just achieving peace. All my wonderful ideals are worth nothing, if I can't speak to the Arab who cleans my street. For me, peace means that every sign on every street will be written in both Hebrew and Arabic.³

Some time ago I have worked with a group of children from Yerucham (a poverty-stricken Oriental Jewish town in the Negev). I was astounded by their ability to express their views about peace and about the worth of human beings. They were much better than the Ratz youth.⁴

We, in the slum neighborhoods, are the real left. Actually, there is no other left in this country.

I myself started from the right, in the Likud. I have passed through a long educational process, which was the result of living in the slums. Only when I understood that equality is being denied to me could I understand that it is also denied to the Arabs."

1. "Hamemad Hashlishi" is available from P.O.B. 24312, Har Hatzofim, Jerusalem, Israel.

2. The word "Mizrah" in Hebrew means both "East" and "Orient"; at times this causes confusions in translation.

3. In theory, both Hebrew and Arabic are official languages in Israel. In practice, however, most public signs are written either in Hebrew alone, or in Hebrew and English. With few exceptions, official signs in Arabic can be found only in Arab-inhabited areas.

4. Ratz (The Civil Rights Movement) is a dovish political party, headed by Knesset Members Shulamit Aloni and Yossi Sarid. It invests a lot of effort in building up its youth movement. The Ratz youth are conspicuous in peace demonstrations and anti-racist mobilisations. Many of them take more radical positions than the parent party. However, like Ratz as a whole, the Ratz youth are mainly Ashkenazi.

The Shahar principles

*The Shahar movement has grown out of the neighborhood. The direction and content of its activities will be based on the needs and aspirations of the neighborhood's residents.

*Shahar will carry on educational activity emphasizing the power of each individual citizen to influence his/her situation and future, within the framework of law and of the democratic system.

*Education based on humanism, tolerance and pluralism is a necessary precondition both to coexistence within Israel and to coexistence with our Arab neighbors.

*Education should be based on the concept of the state of Israel as an integral part of the Middle East; one of the central aims of educational activity must be to strengthen support for Israeli political, social and cultural integration in the Middle East. Such an integration is an important requirement for achieving peace.

*The slum conditions in the Hatikva Quarter are a typical product of the social structure of the state of Israel. Studying the historical and political origins of this social situation is an important stage towards achieving a change.

Unexpected Criticism

On September 5, 1987, Israeli bombers attacked the Ein-el-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon. Leaving fifty dead Palestinians in its wake, this was the deadliest attack since the end of the Lebanon War. It may be more than a coincidence that this air-raid took place just two days before the N.G.O. meeting in Geneva, when rumors about the possible contents of Arafat's speech were already circulating.

After the news came out, peace activists organized the protests which could be expected, and picketed the Defence Ministry in Tel-Aviv. This time, however, a completely unexpected voice was added to the public debate. Major

General Moshe Bar-Kochva told Al Hamishmar: *(The act of) harming women and children is nothing to be proud of. We should be very careful not to harm women and children. As long as we are forced to fight, we should fight in the most humane way possible. We must not use ways of fighting which close the door on future coexistence. If we continue to bomb this way, we will destroy all chances for peace (Al Hamishmar, 6/9/'87).* Bar-Kochva's words were all the more startling, since he has the reputation of being a Likud sympathiser.

Lieutenant General Dan Shomron, the army Chief-of-Staff, did not at all like this political statement from a serving senior officer.* Shomron immediately telephoned Bar-Kochva, severely

reprimanded him and made sure that the reprimand would find its way to the press. On several subsequent occasions Shomron claimed that the area bombed was "a terrorist base far from any civilian habitation" and that "there were no civilian casualties" – in flagrant contradiction to the reports given by Western journalists who visited the bombed site.

** Serving army officers are forbidden to take public positions on political matters, or join political parties. These rules are, however, sometimes ignored. Raphael Eitan, army Chief-of-Staff during the Lebanon War, used every opportunity to let his racist opinion be known.*

* * *

Stop the persecution of Feisal Hussein and Mubarak Awad!

In the occupied territories, the exercise of punishments without trial was stepped up during the past months. Palestinian activists were arbitrarily deported or placed under "Administrative Detention". Of the many victims of such measures, two received particular attention from the Israeli public.

► Feisal Hussein – the son of a much respected Palestinian leader, who fell in battle in 1948 – founded the "Arab Studies Society" in East Jerusalem, which does research on Palestinian history and culture. Gradually, he drew the attention of the authorities by his political activities. Repeatedly and openly, he challenged the occupation, all the while successful in not breaking a single Israeli law. What irked those in power even more were Hussein's contacts with peace-seeking Israelis, lately including the Likud dissident Moshe Amirav (see sep. article). Hussein was told by the police to cease his activities. When he persisted, he was again and again placed under arrest – in all cases without trial. At the time of writing, Feisal Hussein is serving a six-month period of administrative detention, by order of Defence Minister Rabin.

► Mubarak Awad, also an East Jerusalem Palestinian, has become known for his outspoken advocacy of nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation; in many articles and speeches, he called upon the Palestinians under occupation to adopt methods similar to those of Mahatma Gandhi in India's liberation struggle against the British. He offered detailed proposals on how these methods may be adapted to Palestinian conditions*. The military government became concerned, since Awad's suggestions – if massively carried out – could cause the Israeli authorities a serious headache.

To get rid of this "dangerous agitator", a bureaucratic, roundabout way was taken. First, Awad was informed that, since he holds an American passport, his status as a permanent resident of Jerusalem is withdrawn; he was declared to be "a tourist" in Jerusalem, the city where he was born and where his family lived for generations. Next, he was informed that since his tourist's visa had expired and would not be renewed, he must leave the country.

A wave of protests, in Israel and abroad, made the government, so far, hesitate about carrying out Awad's deportation. His situation, however, is precarious. There is no doubt what will happen, as soon as pressure on the government relaxes.

Protests about the persecution of Feisal Hussein and Mubarak Awad and about the use of punishment without trial can be sent to:

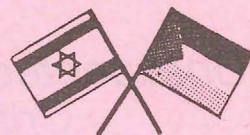
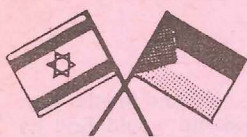
Defence Minister Yitzchak Rabin, Hakirya, Tel-Aviv, Israel

Messages of solidarity to:

Arab Studies Society, P.O.B. 20479, East Jerusalem, Via Israel
and to:

Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence, P.O.B.19543, East Jerusalem, Via Israel

* Mubarak Awad's article "Nonviolent Resistance: A Strategy for the Occupied Territories" is available from the Resource Center for Nonviolence, P.O.B. 2324, Santa Cruz, CA 95063, U.S.A.



The PLP conference

The conference of The Progressive List for Peace was due to take place at the last week of October, as published in our last issue. However, the PLP's organizational resources were, unexpectedly, fully required for other tasks – especially for dealing with the various political and judicial implications of the NGO conference in Geneva. You will be informed of the conference's new date.

BOYCOTT ON SOUTH AFRICA

The Israeli government's extensive ties with South Africa are the subject of growing criticism. In Israel, the ideas spread by the pioneering "Israelis Against Apartheid" group are finding a greater echo among politicians and journalists. Abroad, the increasing awareness of Western opinion is putting the Israeli government in an increasingly uncomfortable position. Some factions in the government, especially in the Foreign Ministry, feel that in South Africa Israel is "backing a losing horse", and wish to disengage from the Apartheid regime. However, the strong economic interest groups involved in trading with South Africa – in particular, the military industries, strongly supported by the Defence Ministry – have, so far, succeeded in protecting their considerable investments.



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The Israeli government did make gestures aimed at easing the pressure. In March, it was declared that no new military contracts will be signed with South Africa, but deliveries of arms under existing contracts could continue. The number, nature and expiry dates of these "existing contracts" are closely-garded secrets, not divulged even to Knesset members. Thus, the government kept its hands completely free.

In September, a series of "civilian" sanctions were announced, prohibiting the import of certain South African products. This list was made up so as to sound as impressive as possible, but has little real content. For example, the importation of oil from South Africa was prohibited – no hardship, since Israel never imported South African oil. On the other hand, no prohibition was made against the import of South African coal – of which big quantities do regularly arrive in Israel. Moreover, no legal machinery was created to implement even these meager sanctions.

On November 9, Knesset Members Muhammad Miari and Matti Peled tabled a private members' bill, which would prohibit Israeli citizens and corporations, as well as the Israeli government, from maintaining any economic ties with South Africa while the Apartheid regime exists. Carefully worked out by lawyers Tamar Peleg and Yosef Bard, the bill provides a detailed model, showing how comprehensive sanctions may be implemented and potential "loopholes" closed in advance.

An additional article in the bill makes it illegal for Israeli citizens to serve in the South African armed forces. This would also include the various auxiliary forces which the South African government employs against its neighbors, some of which reportedly use Israeli mercenaries or "advisers".

In presenting the bill, the two PLP Knesset members intend to expose the sham of the official "sanctions", and to provide a focus for increased parliamentary and extra-parliamentary debate on Israel's relations with South Africa.

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