

The Other Israel

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THE TENACIOUS STRUGGLE

The Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories has now gone through its hundredth day. The number of Palestinians killed has also passed the hundred, though the exact figure is disputed¹. At any moment, hundreds of wounded Palestinians are being treated in hospitals. The total number wounded since the beginning of the uprising is not known; many wounded are not reported out of the well-grounded fear of imprisonment. Thousands of young Palestinians are incarcerated and further arrests are carried out each night². Such is the price which the Palestinian people is willing to pay in order to gain freedom and self-determination.

The shuttling Shultz

The Palestinian uprising reaches, through television screens, into every home in the United States. Further, it threatens the pro-American regimes in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco by providing a potentially contagious example.

Therefore, the outworn Reagan administration had to stir itself. No longer was it possible to postpone decisions and to pass the Middle Eastern buck to the next administration. A diplomatic initiative had to be undertaken - in a hurry - by Secretary of State George Shultz.

Shultz's initiative certainly began as a media success. The pictures of the portly Secretary of State shuttling between Middle East capitals and conferring with kings and presidents were followed by the much publicized Washington visit of Prime Minister Shamir and a new series of public and private meetings.

The United States achieved a momentary diplomatic advantage; both in Israel and in the Arab world, political debates and diplomatic

manoeuvring has revolved around "The Shultz Plan". Yet, this advantage will prove illusory as long as the United States fails to address the central factor: the determination of the Palestinian people - on all levels - to take their fate into their own hands. No longer could decisions concerning them be taken without their participation.

Already during his first Middle East tour Shultz was confronted - on a small scale - with his inability to dictate terms to the Palestinians. The American Consulate in East Jerusalem attempted to round up Palestinians of its choice, to meet Shultz at the time and place determined by him, but none of them turned up. It was made clear to Shultz that, in order to meet Palestinians, he would have to take into consideration their preferences as to the identity of those by whom they want to be represented; and as they happen to regard the PLO as their representative Shultz would have to stop ignoring this organization's existence.

After some indirect negotiations with the PLO, through Egyptian mediation, Shultz agreed to meet the American-Palestinian professors Edward Said and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, thus accepting the principle that the exile-Palestinians, as well as those in the occupied territories, must participate in negotiations. Moreover, the two professors are members of the Palestine National Council (PNC); they received Yasser Arafat's blessing before meeting Shultz and reported to him afterwards.

Nevertheless the State Department made a distinction between the PNC and the PLO, claiming that the first is - but the second isn't - eligible for contacts with the United States government. This distinction is arti-

ficial; the Palestine National Council, playing the role of "a parliament in exile", can be easily located on the PLO's organizational chart. By maintaining this formalistic distinction, however, the United States signifies that it is not ready to overturn altogether the ban on official contacts with the PLO, established by Henry Kissinger in 1975, not to speak of inducing the Israeli government to accept the PLO as a negotiating partner.

On the contrary, moves to close down the PLO's observer mission to the U.N. are continuing, in accordance with the "anti-Terrorist" law recently passed by the Congress; and though Shultz apparently was not very happy with this law, the administration made no attempt to get it abolished.

Any American Middle East "peace plan" or "peace initiative" will inevitably be still-born, as long as the U.S. continues to exclude one of the main parties to the conflict.

A further condition for success is that American Middle East policy liberates itself from another Kissinger heritage: the desire to exclude the Soviet Union from participation in the diplomatic process. In the 1970s the U.S. did score a major coup by detaching Egypt from the Soviet orbit and arranging a series of Israeli-Egyptian agreements, concluding at Camp-David; but since then, all attempts to repeat this achievement failed dismally. King Hussein of Jordan, repeatedly offered the star role in "Camp-David II", just as repeatedly declined the honour and himself makes gestures in the direction of the Soviet Union.

A critical examination of the last decade's events clearly indicates that no Middle East peace will come about which is not acceptable and, therefore, supported by the Soviet

Union. The framework of an International Peace Conference – playing an active, not a merely decorative role – is still the only means through which the peace process could be based on the joint support of all those who have the power to push it forward.

The siege

In December 1987, the uprising started almost spontaneously; certainly nobody planned it in advance. There were local groups and committees at the grassroots level, created during previous struggles. They existed mainly in the refugee camps and the poorer neighborhoods. There was no overall coordination for the whole of the occupied territories. The Israeli army tried to make use of this fact by isolating the most rebellious areas and concentrating its forces on them.

Since the end of January, however, there has arisen a clandestine leadership. All the Palestinian factions which have a following in the occupied territories are represented in it: the supporters of Yasser Arafat and of his more radical rivals George Habash and Naif Hawatmeh, the Communists and the Muslim Fundamentalists. All of these are able to cooperate with each other and with the PLO leadership outside, and to agree upon a joint policy. This "United National Command of the Uprising" regularly issues proclamations, containing detailed instructions on when and how to demonstrate or to strike. So far, 12 such weekly proclamations were issued, printed in clandestine presses by hundreds of thousands of copies, distributed at all areas of the occupied territories – and obeyed by the entire population. In effect, there are now two rival governments striving to control the Gaza Strip, West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The Israeli government has at its disposal incomparably more brute strength; the forces now stationed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are several times bigger than those which sufficed, in 1967, to conquer these territories from the Egyptian and Jordanian armies. In East Jerusalem, the task of "preserving order" is given to the police, in order to uphold the myth that it is "a part of Israel". (In order to obtain the thousands of policemen necessary for the job, policemen were transferred from ordinary police duties, to the delight of the Israeli underworld.)

Helicopters help the ground forces attempting to break up demonstrations. Ordinary "riot control" equipment such as clubs and tear gas grenades is supplemented by new inventions, developed in a hurry by the Israeli army engineering corps. Among others, these include a mechanical catapult, able to throw several hundreds stones in a minute – and a giant net to be dropped from the air on demonstrators, modelled on equipment for catching wild animals.

For all of that, the State of Israel does not possess enough soldiers and policemen to garrison permanently each and every town, village and refugee camp in the occupied territories; yet in practice, Israeli control of the territories is being fast reduced to those pieces of ground on which Israeli soldiers physically stand at a given moment – and there, too, they are often challenged by stone-throwing crowds. The Israeli government lost most of the tentacles through which it was accustomed to reach into, and control, the Palestinian society. The fearsome network of spies and informers, through which the Israeli secret services used to uncover "subversive" groups, is no longer effective. The situation of open collaborators is untenable: two of them were killed; many others publicly renounced the weapons with which the military government had provided them, in order to reintegrate themselves into their communities. Most Arab policemen in the territories resigned, despite all efforts of the military government to dissuade them. Following the policemen, tax collectors resigned as well.

Civil disobedience is becoming widespread, in different forms: merchants' strikes, refusal to pay taxes, boycott of Israeli products, stoppage of work in Israel. In retaliation, Defence Minister Rabin announced a series of sweeping measures. The supply of gasoline to Arab stations in the occupied territories was stopped (to the stations owned by settlers, supply was continued); the telephone links between the territories and countries outside Israel were cut³; to "trouble making" areas telephone lines were cut altogether, and so was electricity; licences for exports to Jordan are being denied to whole towns, and permissions to go abroad are severely restricted; the sum of money which Palestinians are allowed to bring in from abroad is also drastically limited.

The government's repressive mea-

asures were escalated towards "Land Day", March 30. For three days, the whole of the occupied territories were sealed up, and their inhabitants forbidden to travel to Israel or to cross the Jordan river bridges into Jordan; the whole of the Gaza Strip was placed under curfew; telephone lines were cut, to prevent the inhabitants from contacting the outside world or coordinating action with each other; the media were kept out, except for journalists "authorised by the army and accompanied by an army press liaison officer". All of these measures did not prevent the population from again coming out and confronting the army. "Land Day" left four Palestinians dead, 45 wounded – and the Palestinians' spirit unbroken. Measures still considered by the government include complete closure of the Jordan bridges, and altogether forbidding the workers from the territories to work in Israel. Such measures would, indeed, complete the siege of the Palestinian population; but they would also be felt by many Israeli employers and severely damage the Israeli economy on the whole.

In face of these – actual and projected – measures, the Palestinian society is developing ways of mutual help and solidarity, in order to share out scarce resources. As a matter of fact, the economically underdeveloped condition of the occupied territories makes it easier for their inhabitants to resist the new measures. Donkeys are still around to replace the cars (paralysed by lack of gasoline); many villages are practically self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs; the clandestine leadership, in its no^o 11 proclamation, called upon town dwellers, too, to raise chickens and rabbits and to plant vegetable gardens.

The Palestinians are setting up alternatives to the government services which no longer function. After the resignation of the policemen, government spokesmen predicted chaos in the Palestinian society and the outbreak of unlimited crime; but in practice, neighborhoods are effectively taking care of themselves through volunteer committees. The Palestinians also try to reopen schools and universities closed by the military government. (In January all educational institutes, from elementary schools up to universities, were closed for an indefinite period.)

At the same time, the direct violent confrontations between army and demonstrators continue. Defence

Minister Rabin issued new directives, taking away many of the restrictions on the use of firearms – not only by soldiers but also by settlers. The death toll mounts daily, and many are the young Palestinians who will live out their lives as cripples.

The polarization

With every passing day it becomes more clear that the State of Israel is facing the deepest crisis in its turbulent history.

The Israeli economy has already suffered grave damage from the uprising. The merchants' strike has denied the market to Israeli merchandise; the prolonged absence of Palestinian workers, both through strikes and through the Israeli army's own curfews, has damaged Israeli industries and agriculture; daily reports of violence are driving tourists away from Israel; there are growing reports of an economic slump⁴.

The Israeli political scene has never been so deeply divided, not even at the height of the Lebanon War. The Labor-Likud "Government of National Unity" was designed as a means of papering over the fissures which 1982 has opened in Israeli society; now, these fissures have re-appeared inside the government itself. The Labor Party has adopted the "Shultz Plan", uncritically and without reservation; the "Peace Now" movement followed suit, hoping to see in the Shultz initiative the beginning of a process which would lead Israel out of the occupied territories. For the same reason, the Likud and the extreme right furiously opposed Shultz, though Prime Minister Shamir, in Washington, very diplomatically succeeded in saying "no" without uttering the word explicitly.

The debate on Shultz manifested itself in public exchanges of sharp invective between the partners to what is still called "a Government of National Unity", and in two opposing mass rallies which, on two consecutive days, filled the municipality square of Tel-Aviv.

Yet the Likud-Labor divide – though the most visible to a casual observer – is not the only one, or necessarily the most important. Each of the two big parties is deeply divided within itself: the Labor Party is caught in the contradiction between its pretensions to be "a party of peace" and the daily acts of

repression in the occupied territories, inspired and authorized by Labor's Minister Rabin. The Likud appears more ideologically homogeneous, and the fierce struggle for control between its leaders Shamir, Levy and Sharon seems a mainly personal contest, between various shades of rampant nationalism; yet here, too, deep-rooted social forces are wrestling, and from time to time strange undercurrents and dissensions appear.

Public opinion polls predict that, in the general elections scheduled for November – which may take place earlier – both of the big parties will lose voters to more radical parties of the left and the right. The radicalization and polarization are even more strong and apparent among the youth. The Israeli school system, long dominated by the concept of "impartiality" and "non-politization" has become the battlefield of parties, movements and ideologies. Education Minister Yitzhak Navon could do little but legitimize this process, over which he has practically no control.

There is an unprecedented proliferation of new peace groups, expressing the moral outrage many previously not involved citizens feel as the Israeli army is thrust into the role of "Goliath" towards the Palestinian "Davids".

Among other sections of the Israeli public, morality is swept aside in order to justify the idea of "transfer" of the Arabs, an euphemism for mass deportation; anti-Arab racism is becoming more open and aggressive, expressing itself in brutal words and occasional brutal deeds.

For all the tense atmosphere, so far there has been little or no violence between Jewish citizens of Israel; but a Labor leader has already publicly discussed civil war as a realistic possibility⁵.

At the bottom of the crisis lies the clear realization that the status-quo of December 8, 1987, is dead and could never be restored; that in whatever way the struggle in the occupied territories ends, the future will be of a completely different nature.

Many Israelis have already reached the conclusion that continuing the occupation is untenable; not all of them have a clear conception how it should be terminated. Since all half-way solutions, such as "autonomy" or "the Jordanian option" have already failed, anyone sincerely searching for a peaceful solution would eventually have to

accept the only possible way to achieve it: through negotiations in which Israel will, after all, sit together with the PLO, representing the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. These negotiations should and could result in a peace treaty between the arch-enemies; withdrawal by Israel from the occupied territories in which the independent Palestinian state would be formed; and these two neighboring states, as well as other Middle East countries, could at last start to invest their national endeavors in the quality of life of their peoples.

On the other hand, those who feel that Israel must hold on to "Judea and Samaria", and who already realize that this is impossible while this area is inhabited by some 1,700,000 rebellious Palestinians, are bound to arrive at the other "solution": ever more brutal measures of oppression, up to massacres, ending with a total expulsion of the Palestinian population, in disregard of all moral considerations and international restraints. This "solution" could only aggravate the conflict and bring about the Lebanization of Israel, the collapse of all semblance of rationality into a spiral of mutual destruction.

Some Israeli citizens have already committed themselves definitely in one direction or the other. Many are still confused and indeed are becoming even more confused, as the events are remorselessly shattering their preconceived notions of normality. All surveys of "the man in the street" clearly show this disorientation; people often express opinions contradicting the positions of the parties which they claim to support and which swing incoherently from one extreme to the other. The way in which this confusion is resolved will be crucial.

The struggle for the future is now waged in three simultaneous and interlinked arenas: in the "stone battlefields" of the West Bank and Gaza Strip; in the streets and squares of Israeli cities; in the world of international public opinion and diplomacy. Anyone who cares, anywhere in the world, could – and therefore should – take part.

The Editor

1. For example, the authorities claim that the death of a 70-year old Palestinian in Tul-Karm, on March 17, was caused by a heart attack. Therefore, he was not included in the official count. According to Palestinian sources, however, the heart

atack followed the inhaling of a large quantity of tear gas.

2. Already in December 1987, the Israeli army established a new prison camp at Dahariyah, at the south of the West Bank. In March 1988, another one was created in the Negev and hundreds of prisoners transferred to it from Gaza - in contradiction to the Geneva Convention, which forbids an occupying power from transferring prisoners from occupied lands to its own territory.

On March 22, Defence Minister Rabin, announced that 3000 "inciters" were apprehended. Since "inciters" still seem to abound in the territories, two more prison camps are to be established, with the intention of having overall facilities for 5,000 prisoners.

3. Workers at the Israeli international telephone exchange were instructed to refuse any calls by Arabs from the occupied territories; foreigners calling the territories are informed that "due to technical reasons", the link cannot be established. Workers breaking these rules would be fired. The workers at the Israeli international telephone exchange asked the Civil Rights Association to intervene with the Ministry of Communications. They stated: "Our job is to connect people, not to lie to them."

4. According to Economy Minister Gad Ya'akobi, the Israeli economy already suffered losses at about 300 million dollars because of the Palestinian uprising (Israeli television, 22/3/88).

5. On March 20, 1988, Deputy Agriculture Minister Avraham Katz-Öz, speaking at a meeting of Labor doves in kibbutz Ma'ayan-Tzvi, said: "Lately, there are more and more threats, by the (Likud) and its supporters, that leaving the territories would lead to 'a war of brothers'. They should know that in that case there won't be one 'brother' beating another who is being beaten; both 'brothers' will be hitting each other."

organised along professional lines: psychologists, doctors, lawyers, professors, students; journalists; playwrights, actors, painters and sculptors, singers, musicians, writers and poets... Such groups usually organise to publish a common petition; some go no further, while others continue with initiatives such as meetings with Palestinian colleagues.

Other groups organise on a local or regional basis; this is particularly true in the Galilee, where Jews and Arabs often live in close proximity - a situation sometimes giving rise to tensions, but also conducive to dialogue.

Still another group were newly-arrived immigrants, for whom the reality of the occupation sharply contrasted with the dreams which brought them to Israel; they formed the "Israelis by Choice" group.

The intense struggle in the schools has pushed existing youth movements to take a clear stand, and new groups were formed. Part of these youths were already involved, since 1985, in the struggle against the openly racist movement of Kahane. Others have not been politically involved before.

Similarly, several new women's groups have emerged, while old and established women's organizations have taken unprecedented political positions.

The kibbutzim affiliated to Mapam have decided to oppose the government and hold regular demonstrations in Jerusalem. The Labor-affiliated kibbutzim, traditional supporters of Yitzchak Rabin, are in turmoil, with a growing dovish faction challenging the leadership.

One of the distinctive new kinds of activity undertaken are regular vigils, held either daily or once a week. No less than five such vigils have been instituted, by such groups as "The Women in Black", who have already become a landmark in the landscape of Jerusalem.

At the end of February, a peace march - in which thousands of Jews and Arabs travelled, over four days, from Israel's northern border to Jerusalem - was organised by one of the new peace groups, "The Red Line". Included in the march was a rally in Tel-Aviv, in which 45 of Israel's foremost singers appeared.

Another new group - "The Twenty First Year" - promotes actions such as boycott of products from Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; organises parents and pupils to boycott school trips to the West Bank and Gaza Strip; supports

Palestinian workers who are mistreated by the police in Israeli cities; in short "resists the occupation wherever it touches Israeli daily life."

Unexpected Voices

On March 1, at a meeting of writers in Tel-Aviv, writer Chaim Guri stated: "I feel no revulsion or fury at the idea that we must sit down immediately with the PLO and talk about a mutual compromise." Chaim Guri was, in 1967, one of the founders of the "Greater Israel" movement, advocating annexation of the occupied territories; in 1976 he played a key role in successfully lobbying then Defence Minister Shimon Peres to allow "Gush Emmunim" to start its settlement drive on the West Bank.



After a career as agent of the secret service David Kimhi joined the Israeli Foreign Ministry and eventually became its Director-General under then Foreign Minister Yitzchak Shamir. No reservations about his minister's policies were heard from him until his retirement and several years after.

The Palestinian uprising seems, however, to have shaken his opinions. In a lecture on March 22, 1988, at Geneva he stated his belief that "Israel has been wrong, in the last twenty years, to orient herself exclusively towards King Hussein of Jordan, instead of trying to make contacts with the Palestinians". He did not even rule out negotiations with the PLO, "provided that the PLO gives up terrorism and the Palestinian Covenant".

"The Red Line" together with "The Twenty First Year" and the - already existing - "Yesh G'vul" now plan an alternative Israeli Independence Celebration, with the theme that Israel is not truly free as long as it is oppressing the Palestinians.

At a conference of peace groups, held in Tel-Aviv on February 25, no less than 38 groups participated and agreed to set up a loose coordinating committee; even more were formed later.

The new groups and initiatives are politically heterogeneous. They could be divided into two broad categories: those who oppose the occupation without presenting a clearly defined political program; and those who state explicitly that Israel should speak not only with "The Palestinians" in the abstract but with the PLO, the Palestinians' chosen representative. Some groups, therefore, support the Schultz initiative, while others are extremely sceptical about the role it assigns to the Palestinians.

Chronicle of Protests

In the first three months of 1988 dozens of new peace groups came into existence nearly simultaneously. At the same time old, nearly defunct groups suddenly burst into vigorous activity; professional associations, which previously had no political function, have become politically active; there is an enormous influx of people who have suddenly become politicised. Fairly typical of them is Dr. Bernard Hurvitz, a veterinary doctor of Ramat Hasharon and an immigrant from South Africa. Impelled by hearing a young soldier say "Police duty in the West Bank made me sympathise with the white South Africans" Hurvitz conducted a hunger strike for a whole month!

Many of the new groups were

Addresses or phone numbers of most groups are available from The Other Israel, P.O.B. 956, Tel-Aviv. Also available is a comprehensive chronicle of the protest and solidarity actions undertaken by these groups, of which the following is a selection.

■ 29/1 - A petition against the occupation signed by 500 psychologists, nurses and others working in the mental health field. (*For full text, see page ...*)

■ 31/1-10/2 - Three young kibbutzniks hold a hunger strike in front of Prime Minister Shamir's house in Jerusalem, in protest of government policies. Several Knesset Members visit and support them.

■ 2/2 - In the Neve Tzedek theatre a protest meeting takes place against the government's intention to close the magazine *Derech Hanitzotz* (see article). Members of different political groups, journalists and artists take part. Lawyer Tamar Peleg, who had the same day visited Gaza, opens with an eye-witness account "as long as this is not yet forbidden". (The government's move apparently resulted from the magazine's extensive coverage of events in the occupied territories.)

■ 3/2 - At the Southern Negev, members of six kibbutzim hold protest activities against the occupation. They lined several kilometers of the Be'er-Sheba-Eilat highway, holding big placards. After six hours, the police suddenly orders them away, giving no reason.

■ 5/2 - In Tel-Aviv a volunteer committee holds a sale of used articles, to finance aid to beleaguered refugee camps in Gaza.

□ 5/2 - Placards of the "Committee to fight the Occupation" - demonstrating on Dizengoff circle (Tel-Aviv) - are the target of aggression by thugs shouting racist slogans. Municipality security guards, stationed there to guard the fountain, turn against ... the demonstrators.

□ 5/2 - 600 Lecturers sign a petition condemning government policies in the occupied territories. The signatories comprise nearly 30% of the total number of lecturers at all the Israeli universities; they include many well-known professors who never before signed a petition.

□ 5/2 - In Jerusalem, "Down with the Occupation" holds a street-theatre performance. Four actors, dressed as early Zionist pioneers,

speak about their desire for freedom and sovereignty; suddenly changing to Arab clothing and accent they repeat the same phrases.

The Ship Controversy

In January 1988, several hundred Palestinians, who were deported from the occupied territories at some time or another during the last twenty years, intended to sail to Haifa - nodelling themselves on the "Exodus" and other pre-'48 ships of illegal Jewish immigrants. A considerable group of Israeli writers and poets, led by the well-known A.B. Yehoshua, declared their intention to welcome the ship on its arrival. Yossi Har'el, who commanded the "Exodus" in 1947, told *Hadashot*: "You can't defeat refugees...; I don't care if these are Jews, Vietnamese, Palestinians or Indians; refugees, and people deported from their country, should be helped." The writers and Har'el became the target of a concentrated smear campaign, led by government ministers.

Some Israelis travelled to Athens or Cyprus, meeting with the ship's PLO organisers, and intending to sail on it together with the deportees. Among them were two Knesset Members: Muhammad Miari of the Progressive List for Peace and Charlie Biton of Chadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality); there were the veterans of previous meetings with the PLO, such as Chaim Hanegbi, Latif Dori and David Ish-Shalom, but also new faces like Mir'yam Elgazi, who was one of the illegal immigrants on the original "Exodus".

As the readers probably know already, the deportees' ship did not sail: it was blown up in Cyprus by the Israeli secret services, who also killed three of the Palestinian organisers. The Israelis who were present appeared in a press conference, expressing their shock and outrage. On their return to Israel they were searched at the airport, and all Arabic printed material in their possession was confiscated as "subversive" (by policemen who don't know Arabic). Later, they were interrogated by the police, and had to deposit a high bail and to leave their passports in the hands of the police until further notice.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Peace Trial - in which some of the same persons are accused of meeting PLO officials in Rumania - has ended; the verdict is expected at the middle of April.

■ 6/2 - Hundreds of youth movement members spread over cross-roads throughout Israel, with signs and leaflets calling for an end to the occupation and the creation of "a democratic and humanist Israel, which recognises the equality between all people and all peoples.". The initiative was taken by the Jewish-Arab "Re'ut" ("Friendship")

youth movement, which succeeded to bring in all the youth movements connected with Mapam and the Labor Party. Also joining is the youth section of the United Kibbutz Movement, which is affiliated to the Labor Party and is the stronghold of Defence Minister Rabin; the youths' action was taken in defiance of strong opposition.

□ 6/2 - Arab inhabitants of Haifa express their protest against the occupation. Municipal and ministerial officials prevent Arab highschool pupils from joining the demonstration by forcing the principal of the school, under threat of firing him, to close the gates of the school. When the demonstration passes outside the gates, however, all classroom windows are full of hundreds of shouting pupils, in what becomes the highlight of the demonstration.

■ 8/2 - The principal of a religious highschool in Tel-Aviv decides to punish six pupils for refusing to participate in a "study tour" held at Kiryat Arba, an Israeli settlement on the West Bank. The six are excluded from a trip to Poland, to which they were entitled as a reward for good marks. After the publication of the affair, strong protests are voiced. Tel-Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat intervenes and forces the principal to restore the pupils.

□ 9/2-25/2 - At a Tel-Aviv gallery, 50 Israeli photographers present an exhibition entitled "Photographers against the 'Iron Fist' Policy", featuring photographs taken in the occupied territories.

■ 11/2 - At the Weitzmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, 150 students and lecturers demonstrate against the occupation.

■ 13/2 - 5,000 Jews and Arabs participate in a demonstration held in Haifa. Demonstrators march from the municipality to the harbor, as a gesture symbolising their welcome for the Palestinian deportees who strive to return on a ship (see article).

□ 13/2 - 8,000 "Peace Now" supporters hold a rally in Jerusalem. Originally planned to commemorate Emil Grünzweig, the rally turns into a protest against the government's policies. One of the main speakers is Hana Siniora, editor of the East Jerusalem *El-Fajr* newspaper, who hails Grünzweig as "a Jewish fighter, hero and martyr, in whom we (the Palestinians) also have a share".

■ 15/2 - At the Prime Minister's office, two groups of demonstrators

confront each other. The members of "Neve Shalom", a mixed Jewish-Arab village, call upon the government to reach peace through negotiations with the Palestinians; opposite them, members of the extreme right "Tehiya" call for rejection of any compromise.

Joint Committee of Israeli-Palestinian WRITERS AND ARTISTS.

The following statement was released on March 9, 1988, at a press conference at Beit Sokolov, Tel-Aviv. Speaking at the conference were a group of writers, artists and academics from Israel and the West Bank.

We the undersigned, Jewish and Arab writers and artists in Israel, accept and endorse hereby a peace treaty between Israel and a Palestinian state to be established, a peace treaty based on the following principles

1. The establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state in all of the occupied territories held by Israel since the Six Day War of June, 1967, in the so-called West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
2. This sovereign Palestinian state will recognize the right of the State of Israel to live in peace and security within the pre-Six Day War borders at the same time as the State of Israel will recognize the right of the Palestinian state to live in peace and security within its own borders.
3. Both sovereign states, Israel and the Palestinian state - will sign a peace treaty between them including a mutual non-aggression pact. Proper international safeguards will be required to ensure the sovereignty and peace of both states within their recognized borders.
4. A demilitarized Jerusalem with open borders in which both peoples shall live peacefully alongside one another is the capital of the State of Israel as well as the capital of the sovereign Palestinian state.
5. All steps leading to the establishment of the Palestinian state until such a state is actually established will occur under international supervision.

We call hereby on the Government of Israel to open immediate talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization in order to implement the proposed peace treaty within the framework of an international conference or any other framework agreed upon by all parties concerned.

With the commencement of the talks all sides undertake to abstain from any act of violence against another. We call on our Palestinian colleagues to join us in order to act together to achieve a peace treaty based on the above principles.

The signatories included more than a hundred Jewish and Arab intellectuals - among them well-known names - from Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

■ 16/2 - A large public meeting takes place at the "Tzavta" hall in Tel-Aviv. At the start, films are screened showing the conduct of the army in the occupied territories; these were taken by foreign television crews, and were not shown on the (self-)censored Israeli television. The main speaker, the internationally well-known writer Amos Oz, calls for negotiations with the PLO and the creation of a Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel.

■ 20/2 - Pupils in the Ma'aleh Habsor regional school, at which study the children from four kibbutzim close to the Gaza Strip border, hold a public meeting, entitled "Facing Gaza, Facing Peace". One of the organisers states: "When we go out on the fields we see, day after day, the smoke from the burning tyres in Gaza. We decided we must do something about it."

□ 20/2 - Several hundred demonstrators picket the entrance to Megiddo prison, where Meir Amor is incarcerated. The demonstration was organised jointly by "Yesh G'vul" and "The Oriental Front".

□ 20/2-30/3 - Peace Now activists in Jerusalem lodge a complaint to the police about threatening letters and telephone calls, and damage caused to their cars. Similar harassment is also reported by television reporters and members of the Communist Party. After investigation, the police apprehends an 18-year old supporter of Kahane; the acts of harassment continue, however, down to the time of writing.

■ 21/2 - Pupils at "The Experimental Highschool" in Jerusalem initiate a peace demonstration and carry with them pupils from other highschools, who leave their schools during lessons. Altogether, about 200 pupils demonstrate at the Prime Minister's office, where they engage in fist-fights with violent supporters of the racist Kahane, until separated by police. Their speakers state: "We came here because we are soon going to be drafted, and we don't want to wield clubs and tear gas grenades." Several principals state their intention to punish their pupils for deserting the schools; but Shoshanna Bayer, chair of the Teachers' Union, comes out in support of the pupils' initiative.

□ 21/2 - At Nazareth a conference of Arab pupils in Israel took place, with the participation of representatives from the student councils

of 58 Arab highschools, in which 34,000 pupils learn. The conference expresses "full identification" with the uprising in the occupied territories, and calls upon the Arab public in Israel to donate food and medicines to the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

□ 21/2 - In Haifa, a new association is formed by the representatives of 40 Arab villages whose existence is not recognised by the Israeli government. These villages are not allowed to elect municipalities, are not receiving such services as electricity, water, telephones and medical care, and the government destroys houses in them whose construction was "illegal". The new association is to conduct a unified struggle for official recognition of the villages, with the help of such organizations as the Israeli Civil Rights Association.

■ 22/2 - Peace activists picket the "Zionist Organization of America House" in Tel-Aviv. The ZOA-House management agreed to provide a hall for a meeting, organised by the notorious ex-General Rehavam Ze'evi, designed to legitimise discussion about the idea of "transfer" (= deportation).

■ 24/2 - Two peace activists distributing leaflets about the "Red Line" peace march, are assaulted and beaten up by security officers of the "Dizengoff Center" shopping center. (Several weeks after publication of the event, the police announces that the assaulting officers will be prosecuted ... and also the peace activists - for "distributing leaflets on privately-owned premises".)

■ 27/2 - A demonstration takes place in Umm-el-Fahm, one of the largest Arab towns in Israel. The demonstrators carry a mock coffin, in mourning for the Palestinians killed in the occupied territories, and chant slogans against Rabin and against the Schultz plan. Similar demonstrations take place at the towns of Tira, Taybeh and Shefaramer.

□ 27/2-3/3 - 213 painters, sculptors and photographers, organised in a group calling for "immediate negotiations with the Palestinians and an end to the occupation", express their ideas in exhibitions of their works in eight Tel-Aviv galleries, and in public meetings held at these galleries.

□ 27/2 - Several thousands participate in a "Peace Now" demonstration in Jerusalem, calling upon the govern-

ment to accept the Shultz plan. The speakers include Arie Geiger of the religious peace group "Netivot Shalom", and slum activist Yamin Suissa.

■ 28/2 - Members of Mamap kibbutzim demonstrate at the Prime Minister's office. Former Knesset Member Victor Shem-Tov, speaking at the rally, said: "At the beginning of the uprising, Defence minister Rabin predicted that the Arabs would soon tire; but history has shown that a people fighting against foreign occupation does not tire."

□ 28/2-2/3 - "The Red Line" peace march (see page 4).

■ 2/3 - The religious peace movements "Oz ve-Shalom" and "Netivot Shalom" hold a demonstration on the Esther fast which precedes the Purim holiday. The demonstrators adopt as a slogan a verse from the book of Esther: "We must not be silent at this time."

□ 2/3 - The police arrests 27 students of the Jerusalem Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, who hold a procession in the streets of Jerusalem. The police spokesman claims that the students got a permit to hold a festive procession for the Purim holiday but that by holding signs reading "We must not lose our humanity!" they had "gone beyond the terms of their permit."

■ 3/3 - A new pacifist youth movement is formed, committed to oppose any war as a crime against humanity, and not to recognise wars as being defensive.

■ 4/3-10/3 - Students in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem spread leaflets with a call to boycott the lecturers of four professors who organised a petition supporting the government policies. The boycott call sparks a new hot controversy in the university.

■ 5/3 - A solidarity delegation of "Down with the Occupation" visits Kalandiyah refugee camp, north of Jerusalem, and is warmly received by the inhabitants.

■ 8/3 - The Secretary-General of "Na'amat" (women's section of the Histadrut trade union federation) presents a petition calling for equality for women, with hundreds of thousands of signatures. In an act unprecedented for her - normally mild and "uninvolved" - organization, she links the discrimination of women with the occupation and calls for withdrawal of the army from the occupied territories. On the following morning a kindergarten belonging to

"Na'amat" is found wrecked, with the slogan "Death to the Traitors" on its wall.

□ 8/3 - 500 women demonstrate at the center of Tel-Aviv against the occupation and carry slogans which express solidarity with the Palestinian women in the occupied territories, (who take an active part in the uprising).

■ 9/3 - 500 students and lecturers at the religious "Bar-Ilan" University sign a petition calling for "negotiations with the Palestinians". This is particularly significant, considering the fact that "Bar-Ilan" shared in the last decade in the rightward drift of most of the religious Jewish community in Israel. Its student union is dominated by annexationists.

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■ 10/3 - "Stern Group" veterans make a public appeal to Shamir. "Freedom for Israel is not Oppression for the Palestinians" is one of the signs carried at a unique vigil held by ten of Yitzchak Shamir's former comrades-at-arms, from his pre-'48 anti-British underground days. Shamir prefers to enter his residence by the back door.

■ 12/3 - About 100,000 people, by the organisers' estimate, participate in a "Peace Now" rally held in Tel-Aviv, on the eve of Prime Minister Shamir's departure for Washington. "Peace Now" circulates among the crowd an Officers' Letter based on the one sent to Menachem Begin on the eve of his departure to Camp David in 1978, which expressed doubts about "a government which prefers settlements beyond the Green Line to terminating a historic conflict". At that time the letter was signed by 300 reserve officers, the new version of 1988 - already by a thousand!

■ 14/3 - Nearly a thousand teachers answer a call to participate in an emergency meeting of "teachers and educators, to whom education for democracy, peace and coexistence is dear".

□ 14/3 - At the call of the student union, the students of Tel-Aviv

University hold a one-hour strike demanding peace negotiations. A student strike on a political issue is a new departure for the Israeli student unions, who had the tradition of remaining "impartial" and taking a stand only on issues such as tuition fees.

■ 17/3-18/3 - A large protest meeting is held in Tel-Aviv University, at the initiative of the "Thus Far!" group. Palestinians and reserve soldiers give eye-witness testimonies on the occupied territories. One eye-witness - Gazan lawyer Muhammad Abu Sha'aban - is immediately on returning home arrested and placed under six months' Administrative Detention. On the following day, 100 students and lecturers picket the house of Defence Minister Rabin, in protest.

■ 19/3 - In Tel-Aviv, Israeli doctors meet with Palestinian colleagues, to discuss the situation in the occupied territories. All of the 80 Jewish doctors undertake to participate in protest actions, should one of the Palestinian participants be arrested.

■ 25/3 - Police breaks up the weekly Haifa vigil of "The Committee to fight the Occupation" and arrests four participants, claiming that the leaflets spread by them "express identification with the PLO".

□ 25/3-27/3 - Demonstrators in Haifa, Nazareth and Tel-Aviv protest against the closure of Al-Ittihad newspaper (see article page ..).

■ 26/3 - Women's groups from Lydda and Tel-Aviv march through Lydda in solidarity with the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The march takes place in a quiet way and has an official permit, but a huge police escort closes around it from all sides. The next day one of the Lydda organisers is interrogated at Ramleh police station.

■ 27/3 - At a ceremony held at the Ben-Tzvi Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, research grants are given. One of the researchers, 29-year old Amnon Raz, states from the rostrum: "I find it difficult to receive a grant for research on the history of a persecuted minority in the Middle Ages at a time when, a few kilometres from here, we ourselves are behaving in a brutal manner, completely contradicting the principles of my research. Therefore, I have decided to donate all of my grant money to the "Down with the Occupation" movement.

■ 28/3 - A petition is signed by 1020 doctors and medical students, condemning the beating policy and the infringement of human rights in the occupied territories.

□ 28/3 - Several hundred demonstrators march through Jerusalem, and hold a rally near the President's residence. The demonstration was organised by a newly-established coalition of peace groups.

□ 28/3 - The head of the Israeli army's radio station decides to forbid the inclusion in the station's program of a new song by well-known rock singer Si Heyman. The song includes the lines: "Shooting and shedding tears/ Burning and laughing/ When did we learn to bury the living/ And when did we forget that our children, too, were killed." Two disk-jockeys, who had included the song in their program, are reprimanded.

■ 30/3 - "Land Day", the traditional day of struggle of Israel's Arab citizens, is marked by a general strike of nearly the entire Arab population, and by four giant rallies, which enjoy the solidarity - and participation - of more Jewish Israelis than in previous years. The organisers succeed in preventing violent provocations - from their constituency as well as from the police - though the tension stays very near the surface.

"Manifestly illegal"

A shock went through Israel and the entire world on February 26; a photographer of C.B.S.network succeeded in catching in his camera one of the cases in which Defence Minister Rabin's notorious beating policy was implemented. In face of the world-wide protests the Israeli government could not avoid having the soldiers involved put on trial. There, the soldiers claimed that their actions were in no way different from those of hundreds of other soldiers who did not chance to be photographed red-handed - in which they were apparently right. They also claimed to have acted under the orders of their superiors. However, the legality of such orders has come under question. Already on January 28 Knesset Member Matti Peled, of the Progressive List for Peace, explicitly called upon soldiers to disobey such "manifestly

illegal orders". He was followed two weeks later by Mapam Knesset Member Ya'ir Tzabam speaking at the Peace Now rally of February 13 in Jerusalem. In the ensuing public controversy, the pressure of well-known jurists forced Attorney-General Charish to take a stand, in a letter sent to Defence Minister Rabin.

Why I refused

Meir Amor, 34, is a member of "The Oriental Front", a peace group founded by Oriental Jews. He studies sociology and anthropology at Tel-Aviv University. During his period of obligatory military service, he reached the rank of captain, and commanded an infantry company. On December 31, 1987, he appeared in the "Yesh G'vul" press conference (see prev. issue) in which the petition of 160 reserve soldiers, refusing to serve in the occupied territories, was presented. Only a few weeks later he was ordered to present himself for reserve duty, and to take up the post of deputy commander in a new battalion, formed with the specific purpose of "restoring order" in the occupied territories. Upon his refusal, he became the third refuser to be actually imprisoned since the beginning of the uprising, and the first officer. Amor left an open letter, setting out the reasons for his act. The following is an excerpt.

"I am not willing to put myself in the situation where the commands of the army direct me in a way opposite to the commands of my conscience. Therefore, I have refused to serve in the occupied territories.

What is happening in the occupied territories is the result of a twisted political conception; a conception based on the belief that it is possible to rule and oppress a whole social group, without allowing its members to express their national, social and cultural identity (...) This conception is applied to both Palestinians and Oriental Jews (...) The social problem of the slums and the Development Towns, whose inhabitants are at the bottom of the Jewish society, is inextricably tied to the Palestinian problem. Separating them is a central part of the rulers' strategy. (...) Peace would bring about a political change, which might endanger the position of the ruling groups.

Refusal to cooperate with the government is a legitimate means for free citizens, expressing their reaction to the leaders' irresponsibility.

By refusing, I declare the political leaders of Israel unfit for the task to which they were elected."

(Quoted from Hadashot and Yediot Aharonot 9/2/88)

The army and Defence Ministry then published "clarifications": soldiers were forbidden to beat prisoners who are not resisting. However, soldiers have the right to break into

houses, while chasing stone-throwers, and beat anyone resisting them there. Any debate as to whether blows were delivered before or after capture, is - in the absence of "impartial observers" - automatically decided in the soldiers' favor. At the same time, great effort is made to prevent the presence of media or other observers.

Eleven reserve soldiers and two conscripts have so far served prison terms for refusal to participate in putting down the Palestinian uprising. Several of them were not among the 400 signatories of the "Yesh G'vul" petition, who stated their refusal in advance. Ehud Madnik of kibbutz Dan made a spontaneous decision. As an officer of the army engineering corps he was placed in charge of destroying, without trial, the house of a Palestinian suspected of stabbing an Israeli. This made him decide not to obey any orders to participate in "police actions" in the occupied territories.

Not all cases of "military disobedience" lead to imprisonment: a soldier in the Gaza Strip refused to shoot a tear gas grenade into a house; another refused to take up a club issued to him; a captain decided, on his own authority, not to issue clubs to the soldiers under his command.

The highschool students group, advocating refusal to serve in the occupied territories, also gets many new adherents. The establishment takes it quite seriously; both Defence Minister Rabin and President Herzog have personally appeared in high-schools in order to convince the pupils that, after conscription, they should serve obediently.

Gradually Israelis lose confidence in the authorities. On March 20, an Israeli soldier was shot to death in Bethlehem - the only such case in the whole uprising, in which the use of firearms is exceptional due to the clandestine leadership's self-restraint. Also exceptional was the reaction of the girlfriend of the killed soldier: "I have begged him to desert and not to go back to the territories. Oh, why didn't he listen to me" (*Yediot Aharonot* 21/3/88). Only those who know how deeply rooted in Israeli culture is the veneration for the army would understand how significant is the publication of such an item in Israel's largest-circulation newspaper.

"The media are to blame"

On February 19 Uri Porat, the director of the Israeli broadcasting authority forbade the Israeli television from broadcasting a satire on the situation in the occupied territories, which he claimed was "anti-Israeli PLO propaganda". The text of the banned satire was published on the front page of several newspapers - who felt that the freedom of the press was at stake. Many Israelis - expecting quite something - found the satire in fact rather mild.

Television and press coverage of the Palestinian uprising have been very uncomfortable to the Israeli government. Unwilling to stop its "photogenic" acts of repression the government instead turned against the journalists. The Palestinian press is faring the worst: dozens of journalists have been arrested; Palestinians found in possession of a press card are often singled out for a particularly brutal treatment. The Arab papers of East Jerusalem are still allowed to appear; but 90% to 95% of the news items which they seek to publish are banned by military censorship, including many items translated from the Israeli press. Advertisements, cross-word puzzles, etc. are from time to time also considered "subversive" and censored out. In comparison, the Israeli press enjoys great freedom; yet it, too, labors under growing constraints, in the form of both "self-censorship" and more and more direct government interference.

The government did not go as far as announcing an official policy of closing the occupied territories to media coverage. In practice, however, army officers in the territories are given wide powers to prevent the entry of journalists to areas in which a demonstration is being dispersed, or in which arrests are carried out. The exercise of these powers may be accompanied by violent assaults on Israeli as well as foreign journalists; there were cases of smashed cameras and journalists threatened with drawn guns. When American television networks were involved, the army offered vague apologies, however, without putting the soldiers concerned on trial.

Indeed, the soldiers were encouraged by the systematic campaign, carried out by certain Knesset Members and Ministers, who portrayed the media as "helping the enemy" or itself

"being the enemy". This campaign was joined by President Chaim Herzog in person. Herzog stated that "the television camera, broadcasting to all over the world, is now the enemy's main weapon. Should we leave this weapon in the enemy's hand, out of democratic or liberal principles?" (Yediot Aharonot, 11/3/88).



On February 16, the government went ahead with the closure of *Derech Hanitzotz* magazine, which had distinguished itself by detailed reporting of events in the occupied territories (see previous issue). On the same day Ribhi El-Arury, one of its correspondents, was arrested. He was placed for two days in a narrow cupboard, and threatened with death by his secret service interrogators; nevertheless, he refused to "admit" that *Derech Hanitzotz* was financed by "a terrorist organization". On March 8, he was placed under 6 months' Administrative Detention without trial. Some of the staff members of *Derech Hanitzotz* published a brochure, condemning the closure of their paper; they were informed by the government officials that the publication of this brochure constitutes "an attempt to continue the publication of an illegal newspaper" and were forbidden to publish any more material in any form. The police raided their printer, in order to enforce the new decree. This ban goes even beyond the wide powers given to the Israeli government by the "Emergency Regulations"; after consulting their lawyers, the staff members published another brochure, in a different format.*



On March 25, 1988, the Israeli government ordered the closure, for a week, of the Communist Party's "Al-Itihad", which is the only Arab-language daily published in Israel; the government claimed that the paper's coverage of the uprising in the occupied territories was "inflammatory" and "threatening public order". This attack, on an old and well-established newspaper, was sharply condemned even by some known anti-Communists. It marks a new escalation in the government offensive: in order to maintain the occupation, the Israeli government has to rid itself of the free press.

*This struggle is carried through the newly-formed "Committee to Defend the Freedom of the Press", which may be contacted through P.O.B. 1575, Jerusalem.

I can't stand it once more

On Monday March 14, the extreme right-wing students' group Tzomet - followers of the notorious ex-General Rafael Eytan - organized a meeting in the Tel-Aviv University which got the attention of the world media. They invited Rechav'am Ze'evi, another ex-General, now curator of the Tel-Aviv municipal museum, but especially known for his flirtation with underworld circles - and lately with fascism.

Ze'evi started his career in the Palmach (the elite unit of the pre-'48 Jewish militia, in which many a political career was born) and, so far, succeeded in remaining part of the establishment. Therefore, his participation in something illegitimate makes it less so. "Tzomet" asked him to explain for a wide audience - with press invited - his concept of "transfer" (which stands for "clearing" Israel of Arabs) in a lecture entitled "The Freedom of Speech and the Exchange of Populations". The university authorities lent their hall for this aim because of the policy of allowing political activities of any kind.

The press did come, including television crews. But it was not an unmitigated success for "Tzomet". The combined peace camp of Tel-Aviv University had complied with the invitation to the "open debate". As soon as Ze'evi arrived, a 65-years old man from the audience put a question to the organizers. He asked if it is legal to discuss such a subject, when a law against racism does exist. This seemed to be the signal for the student peace groups present to applaud. The man became more excited, the students applauded again. The "Tzomet" organizers asked university security for the removal of the man. The protesting students became really wild. During ten minutes there was a big tumult, with many placards shown and the slogan "Fascism will not pass" chanted. After a threat of the dean in person to forbid, from now on, all political activity in the university, the chairman of the student union asked the protesters to leave. The hall was left three-quarter empty. That evening the student protest,

spontaneously led by an older man, was an item on television news programs in Israel and abroad. The Other Israel made an appointment with the man.

Avraham Hass lives in one of the streets in the center of Tel-Aviv where the trees are almost as high as the apartment buildings. Every morning, after listening to the news of six o'clock, he goes to work on his bicycle. He has his own - small - typing office in the north of Tel-Aviv. It is not his habit to go to meetings in the university. But the "Union of anti-Nazi Fighters"* made a written appeal protesting the idea of "transfer". Hass went to the meeting to spread this message. He did not have contact with the students before. "I decided to go into the hall only after the university security men prevented me from spreading the leaflet. There I heard the chairman explain why the press was invited: To let this subject become a legitimate part of an open public debate! All very quiet, academic, sophisticated. Just a debate about the fate of our neighbors. Questions could be put after the lecture. That infuriated me. At once I found myself raising my hand. I asked whether this subject was legal, and to my surprise three-quarter of the audience applauded. I continued: 'I experienced fascism once in my life; I cannot stand it once more. We came 40 years ago to build ourselves a state which would live in peace and friendship with its neighbors, the Palestinian Arabs, but what you want is another catastrophe.'

I am from a religious home, went to a "Cheider" (religious elementary school) and to a "Yeshivah" (religious secondary school). On the age of fifteen in the 1930s, when we saw fascism developing in our country - Rumania - we turned away from religion. This was our uprising against God. In '41 the Jews of the part of Rumania where I lived were all deported to Ukraina. In '44 we were liberated by the Soviet army. We went home. We got our rights back. But after all the humiliations, we were very much moved by the idea that there would be a Jewish state. We, the young Jews returning from the camps and the ghettos who found ourselves without a family, were willing to devote ourselves to fighting for such a state and to take part in such a historical act. I have never been a Zionist. It was enough to be a Jew. But I am also not an anti-Zionist. In my eyes Zionism is not

demonic. You could criticize it for being an utopian dream. It did not do what it pretended: to solve the Jewish question. The Jewish state did not save the Jews in Europe. On the contrary, we surviving European Jews fought to save that Jewish state. I was in the Hagana (*Jewish militia*) - in the British prison camp on Cyprus - and afterwards in the Palmach.

We all wanted a democratic, progressive, peaceful state. We wanted to rehabilitate physical labor and agriculture. Jews who, for many reasons, had not been used to that, should get used to it. The enemy was "imperialism", the British. With the Arabs in and outside Palestine we expected to bring about peaceful relations. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Those in power in Israel behaved according to what is said in the Bible about the ox: 'when the ox became fat it started to kick.' Israel, the ox, became fat. After the Six-Day-War a development began. It was clear from the moment they talked about the "liberated" territories. What developed was appetite for occupation. Oil, cheap labor, a new market! And the villas given by the government to bribe people into becoming settlers made a solution of self-determination even more complicated. When this Rechav'am Ze'evi was in the Palmach he did not yet say - what everybody could hear him now say in the news broadcast - that there is no place in this land for two peoples! He really became "fat" these days. But now, since the uprising in the occupied territories, things are changing. Every Israeli has to realise it. Everybody's interests are in one way or another at stake. This was not brought about by the superpowers, from which both Israelis and Palestinians hoped far too long to get their national aspirations fulfilled. This was not brought about by terrorism. Terrorism, on the contrary, helped the Israeli nationalist-extremism to develop. This was brought about by a reaction of a whole population, which was a natural result of a development. Even the small businessmen which I meet daily in my work - who until today used to believe what they read in the Ma'ariv paper - now expect a defeat for the right-wing in the elections! I hope they are right, but let's not be too optimistic. If the right-wing nationalists will not be stopped it will all end in another catastrophe.

My family is characteristic of the

division in this country. My brother and I have more or less the same past, but one becomes a settler and the other a left-winger and peace-activist. I was deeply influenced by the only moment that I saw my father cry; it was on the day we had to leave all we had, to be deported: the house, the cows, not the land - the land was already confiscated before. My father was then sixty. After we had taken just a few things on our carriage he cried and said: all my life I worked and took care of the house, the farm, the family and now there is nothing left for us. That he said and cried, and that is what I see before my eyes when I hear of expulsion. To expel a people from its inherited soil, its home, its land! My brother had typhus at that time. I took him on my back.

For us who survived, what depends is the conclusion one drew from being in the inferno: to remain a human being in whatever circumstances, or to let oneself become a wolf. We have tried to at least stay human. There is the myth, which was never really contested, that all were victims. In fact, there were victims and victims. There were those who collaborated, who corrupted themselves for small profits, for a piece of bread at the expense of a fellow victim. And all these live among us. Those got through alive more than the others.

Most people don't think about such "far-away matters". But one of my customers, with whom I have a debate from time to time, was not as confident as usual when he told me that his son was drafted for army service these days..."

* Union of anti-Nazi Fighters and Victims of Nazism in Israel, P.O.B.17432, Tel-Aviv 61171. The organization is affiliated with the Fédération International de la Résistance (FIR).

The New Israel Fund's strange choices.

In recent years, the "New Israel Fund" was accepted as an alternative by those American Jews who no longer wanted to give support for Israel through the establishment channels (such as The United Jewish Appeal) but were motivated to support "peace projects". When New Israel Fund organised, on January 27, 1988, in Jerusalem an "Emergency Conference of Organizations for Jewish-Arab Coexistence", this seemed a fitting initiative for such an

alternative organization. Thirty-six organizations were invited to take part, but the New Israel Fund did not consider the ICIPP worthy of being one of them. Several Knesset Members and other Israeli VIPs were invited to address the gathering; all of them belonged to the Labor Party or to Ratz. Conspicuously absent were representatives of the Progressive List for Peace and the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality – the two only parliamentary factions which are composed of Jews and Arabs in equal numbers.

The New Israel Fund did invite Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek as one of the main speakers. On that very week Teddy Kollek had called upon Defence Minister Rabin to use the army in order to break the Arab merchant's strike in East Jerusalem – not very favourable towards Jewish-Arab coexistence, one would say.

Despite repeated queries – both before and after the conference took place – Gila Svirski of the NIF Jerusalem office, was unable to give a satisfactory answer as to why such choices were made.

Golden Goose

Dear Sir,

Your newsletter, which I came across accidentally, having just arrived back from the UK, gave me fresh confidence, particularly after a period of time when everything originating from Jewish sources, be it individuals I met in Hyde Park, or what I read in the newspapers, all pointed to a gloomy state of affairs. All of this is compounded by the recent atrocities exercised by army personnel, obeying regrettable orders from their high commands, thinking that what they are doing will weaken the people's will, where in fact the opposite is happening, and the people's built in defiance is increasing.

My sincere hope is that Israeli people in this land will awaken to the fact that we the Palestinians, given the opportunity to establish our own state, are willing and able to live in peace with Israel. I would like to see more and more Israelis supporting the "Peace Now" movement, and participate more fully in creating an atmosphere leading to a situation where we Palestinians and Israelis sit together to reach a solution based on two states living in peace together, and working for the betterment of our area.

Yours Sincerely, Walid.M.Awad

Mr.Awad sent us, with his letter, a long article in which he gives a detailed report of the way in which the occupation effects the life of the

Palestinians under its rule, which helps to understand what made the Palestinians start their uprising. Out of it, we chose to print here an account of "normal" conditions on the Jordan bridges – the Palestinians' only link with the Arab world – drawn, presumably, from Awad's own observations in his recent travelling. A copy of the full article may be obtained by writing to: Walid Awad, P.O.B. 717, Ramallah, West Bank (via Israel).

One of the issues which has created the worst embodied feelings amongst Palestinians is the passage through the bridges into Jordan. To start with, the bridges are used by the Israeli authorities as their "Golden Goose", where large sums of money are extracted from the Palestinians by exploiting their need to travel to Jordan. Around \$45 per person has to be paid before permission to travel is given; on top of that the traveller has to pay three times the average price for transportation to the bridge area; this is because the Israeli authorities impose large fees on the cars responsible for carrying passengers to and from the bridges.

The Palestinians travelling back and forth to Jordan have to go through humiliating procedures of physical search, plus a luggage search. The time that would lapse between entering the bridge area and leaving it is a minimum of four to five hours, regardless of how much luggage one is carrying.

Any other persons (not Palestinian) travelling through the bridge take a different passage, and are provided with all types of facilities so that their travel is made as easy and pleasant as possible, creating among them the idea that the Palestinians are treated in the same way.

Critical Jews speak out

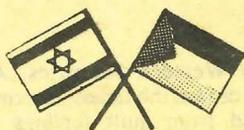
In the last twenty years, Israelis gradually got used – whether they liked it or not – to the social, political and ideological effects of a lasting military rule over the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Jews outside Israel were not pressured by daily reality to change their idealized conception of Israel. One of the consequences was that, until recently, Israeli governments could continue to rely on the unconditional support of the Jewish communities

in the Western countries. As a matter of fact, the Israeli government profited from guilt feelings. The existence of Israel was felt by many Jews abroad to be their personal rehabilitation after the Holocaust, but they did not have a share in the discomforts of pioneer life and state of war. The least they could do – so they were made to feel – is never to criticize Israel "as long as they did not come to live there". There was little or no contact with Israelis who were critical of the intransigent government policy towards the Palestinians. These Israelis were gaining ground inside Israel, but did not have the means to work among World Jewry. The Jewish communities remained on the side of the Israeli establishment, giving it important moral and practical support.

Of course there always have been Jewish individuals with "dissident" views. But these were most often not the kind of Jews who mainly devoted their political energy to working inside the existing Jewish community or organized in specifically Jewish organizations. Progressive Jews were often active in all kinds of progressive movements, but did not always apply their progressive principles to Israel. If they did, they found themselves, as dissident Jews, so isolated that they turned away from the issue.

The first significant change was brought about, in 1982, by the shock of the Lebanon War. The debate inside the Jewish communities could no longer be silenced. After the demonstration of the 400,000 in Tel-Aviv, "Friends of Peace Now" groups were formed everywhere. The more politically outspoken part of the Israeli peace camp – which supports negotiations with the PLO – also found a reflection abroad. Groups such as "Critical Jews" or "Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace" founded themselves. Contact with similar groups in other countries came about in networks like the "International Jewish Peace Union"; contact was made with Palestinians living in the respective countries – resulting in Jewish-Palestinian Dialogue groups – and with the Israeli peace movement. These groups consisted to a certain extent of Jews who had never before chosen to be members of a Jewish group, but they also included critical members of the existing Jewish organizations. On the whole, these groups made themselves felt, but they remained a small minority, whose views were not always accepted as legitimate.



The PLP Conference

The conference of the Progressive List for Peace, originally scheduled for October 1987, will take place on April 29-30, 1988, at Nazareth. It will be the conference of a party likely to face, within the next six months, a threat to its very right to exist.

In its activity, in its platform, in its Jewish-Arab composition, the PLP challenges what the establishment calls "the national consensus". One of the elements of this "national consensus", recently questioned by the PLP, is the mystical belief in "unified Jerusalem".

On March 9, 1988, Knesset Member Matti Peled presented a bill aimed at abolishing the annexation of East Jerusalem. Peled pointed to the active participation of East Jerusalem Palestinians in the uprising and stated that true coexistence could only be established on equal terms, with East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, and West Jerusalem - of Israel.

On February 6, Uri Avnery, PLP co-chair and editor of *Ha'olam Hazeh*, visited Tunis and conducted an interview with PLO chair Yasser Arafat, thereby breaking another taboo - dialogue with the PLO. In the controversial interview Arafat stated: "I agree to participate in an International Conference with the participation of all parties to the Middle East conflict, including the government of Israel, my enemy" (*Ha'olam Hazeh*, 17/2/88).

Another contact with the PLO was connected with the "Deportees' Ship" project (see sep.art). Upon the return of K.M.Muhammad Miari from Athens, right-wing Knesset Members started, once again, proceedings to remove his parliamentary immunity. Soon afterwards "Techiyah" supporters violently broke up mock elections, to take place at a school in Holon (a Tel-Aviv suburb), because PLP Parliamentary Secretary Chaim Hanegbi was one of the speakers invited to address the pupils. A few days later, Likud K.M.David Magen stated that the PLP and the Communist Party are "subversive organizations which should be outlawed".

At the general elections, scheduled for November, an attempt is likely to be made - as was the case in 1984 - to stop the PLP from running.

Organizations or individuals wishing to attend the PLP conference as observers (at their own expense) should contact: Progressive List for Peace, P.O.Box 31109, Tel-Aviv, Israel; or: Rev.Canon Riah Abu Al-Assal, P.O.Box 75, Nazareth, Israel. It is possible to contact the PLP at the following phone numbers: (06) 554532 (Nazareth); (03) 659474 (Tel-Aviv); (06) 554017 (Rev. El-Assal).

It seems that the current uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the way the Israeli government copes with it - visible in the daily television broadcasts - is the beginning of a new stage in the emancipation of Jewish communities outside Israel from "the Godfather", the Israeli government. The reaction of Jews outside Israel could gradually become a positive factor in the struggle for peace.

Italian Jewry for peace

Translated from the French version.

The violent popular revolt of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and Jerusalem, as well as the Israeli response - conceived purely in terms of repression - have filled us with anxiety. We are more and more afraid that, once again, a process of polarization and of mutual incomprehension and intolerance bars, on both sides, all efforts to find a peaceful, negotiated solution of the conflict.

The political paralysis of the current coalition government in Israel forces us to demand strongly to make room for a peace founded on mutual respect. Such a peace is equally vital and indispensable for both sides, - despite the tragically conflicting legitimate rights of the Jewish and of the Arab-Palestinian people.

Therefore, we appeal to all those in Israel for whom justice is a supreme value, handed down through our traditions. We call upon them to oppose, in clear terms, the ideology of repression and to pursue with courage the ideals which constitute our most precious inheritance, transmitted to us by the generations who built and created for us the state and the civilisation of Israel.

95 Signatures, among which those of the President of the Union of Italian Jewish communities, of several members of its Council and of the Presidents or vice-Presidents of the Venice, Torino, Trieste, Vercelli, Merano, Modena and Genoa Jewish communities.

Poll

On March 3, a poll was circulated at (Labor Party-affiliated) Kibbutz Yif'at. One of the questions: *Are you in favor of Israel opening negotiations, without preconditions, with any willing Arab partner, including the PLO?* - "Yes", answered 203 (out of 257)! Former Labor minister Chaim G'vati, the most well-known member of Kibbutz Yif'at, was asked by *Davar* newspaper for his reaction. He told the paper that he himself supports the position of the 203.

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