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LET MY PEOPLE BE SETTLERS...

All along the 1980s, Israeli politicians expressed their annoyance at the Soviet Jews' marked preference for the United States as an emigration target. Of the Soviet Jews arriving to the Vienna "way station", only a thin trickle went on to Israel.

For years, the Israeli government has been putting pressure on both American legislators and American Jewry to end Soviet Jewish immigration to the U.S. At the end of 1989, this campaign was crowned with success; Congress imposed severe limitations on the entry of Soviet Jews to the U.S. at the very time that the Soviet authorities dismantled most of their restrictions on emigration.

Ideological Zionism attracts only a small number of the Soviet Jews, but many Jews are apprehensive about the appearance of anti-semitic groups in the Soviet Union, or of cases in which other ethnic minorities, such as the Armenians, are the target of bloody pogroms. Moreover, the crisis of the Soviet economy drives Soviet citizens of all ethnic origins to consider emigration to any western country willing to receive them. Through the machinations the Israeli government Soviet Jews who want to leave their country have not had much choice but to go to Israel.

Yet when in planeloads Soviet immigrants started arriving at Ben Gurion Airport, the same government was caught napping. No contingency plans were available, and the top-heavy bureaucracy in the Ministry of Absorption is in disarray. Nor is the Israeli economy - undergoing a years-long recession - prepared to receive hundreds of thousands of new immigrants. More than a half million Israelis live below the official poverty line; ten percent of the workforce is unemployed (and the figure is on the rise); in different parts of the country laid-off workers and bankrupt farmers clash with the police; the education and health services are nearing collapse.

Jewish immigration is a most basic principle of Israel's state ideology. This principle was directly challenged by Jerusalem slum leader Yamin Swisa, who called upon Soviet leader Gorbachov to halt Jewish emigration from his country until poverty in Israel is eradicated. Mainstream politicians were quick to condemn Swisa's heretical act; nevertheless, it is clear that many poor Israelis share his feelings and view the grants, tax exemptions and housing

benefits to which Israeli law entitles every new (Jewish) immigrant with resentment.

By contrast, Israel's right-wing political leaders are elated at the wave of immigration, which they regard as a last-minute chance to salvage the dream of "Greater Israel". The settlement of hundreds of Soviet Jews in "Judea and Samaria" would - so the annexationists hope - permanently alter the demographic balance, making a Palestinian state impossible.

These hopes found their expression in Prime Minister Shamir's statement: "A great aliya (Jewish immigration) needs a Greater Israel". Made to a select audience of Shamir's supporters, this statement achieves worldwide notoriety within hours of being leaked to the press. However, Shamir's dream leaves quite a few concrete realities unaccounted for. In the first place, most of the Soviet Jews themselves have no particular inclination to become "settlement-fodder". Surveys of Soviet Jews who arrived to Israel in the 1970s and 1980s indicate that they tend to gravitate to Israel's main population centers, or to old-established towns*; the newcomers are likely to be similarly inclined.

More important, the Israeli government is not at complete liberty to dispose of the immigrants as it wishes. Immigrant absorption is an expensive business; according to the Israeli Finance Ministry (quoted in *Yediot Aharonot*, 23.1.90), each 3-person Soviet family would cost the treasury some 123,500 Israeli Shekel (about \$60,000). At this rate, a hundred thousand immigrants would cost about two billion dollars. To get that sum, two ways are available: the imposition of heavy new taxes for the specific purpose of supporting the immigrants, which may onlyacerbate the existing resentments and bring them to the boiling point, or financial aid from the United States. American officials have already indicated that such aid would not be forthcoming for the West Bank settlement, and that its granting may be conditional upon the end of the Israeli obstruction of the peace process.

The tone in Washington is changing fast: for the first time in two decades, aid to Israel has become a controversial issue in American politics, with a senior senator such as Robert Dole openly advocating a 5% cut. The repercussions of Shamir's "Great immigra-

tion – Greater Israel” speech may have accelerated this change of tone in Washington.

Thus, the wave of Soviet Jewish immigration, far from being the corner-stone of “Greater Israel”, may turn out to be the instrument by which the annexationist dream is finally laid to rest.

Jordanian cauldron

On the night of January 4, an eighteen-year old Jordanian soldier quietly left his unit and crossed the narrow band of water separating the Jordanian and Israeli armies. On his bunk he left a letter: “Farewell, my comrades! I have gone to do my Muslim duty and fight in the Jihad against the Zionist enemy...” For the next four days the Jordanian soldier, hidden in an abandoned pillbox, shot at tourists visiting the nearby hot springs of Hamat Gader (el-Hama), narrowly missing several of them. This gunfire – in an area which was completely quiet since being occupied by the Israeli army in 1967 – got banner headlines in the Israeli press. On the morning of January 7, Defence Minister Rabin promised the cabinet that “the affair will be dealt with”. On the same day, large Israeli forces entered no man's land and surrounded the pillbox; after a brief firefight, the young Jordanian lay dead; his former comrades, observing from the other bank, did not intervene.

Thus ended the latest in a series of incidents along what was, for nearly two decades, Israel's quietest frontier.

The Black September massacre of 1970 broke the Palestinian forces in Jordan, and the rule of King Hussein was buttressed at the cost of thousands of lives. In subsequent years, the Jordanian security services maintained tight control over the Palestinian population, which comprised more than half of Jordan's citizens. Simultaneously, King Hussein offered considerable benefits – including several government portfolios – to those Palestinians who were willing to support his rule. On the Jordan River, the King's army maintained an “incident-free border”; during the Yom-Kippur War, the Israeli army could safely divert most of its forces to the Egyptian and Syrian fronts, leaving only a skeleton force to confront the silent Jordanian guns.

Over the years, King Hussein built up an extensive network of contacts with Israeli leaders, establishing a “de-facto peace”. The Israeli Labor Party based its entire peace program on the hope of achieving an agreement between Israel and Jordan, which would exclude and subjugate the Palestinians. This policy culminated in the secret “London Treaty” of 1985, signed between King Hussein and Labor leader Shimon Peres, but repudiated by Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud Party.

The outbreak of the Intifada at the end of 1987 upset all calculations, and the shock waves were quickly felt in Hussein's kingdom, just across the river from the rebellious West Bank. The king, while tightening security at the Palestinian refugee camps dotted across his realm, was quick to make a major concession: he publicly renounced all claims on the West Bank, in favor of PLO sovereignty there. In return, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat recognised Hussein's rule east of the Jordan.

Indeed, the challenge to King Hussein's rule, in the first half of 1989, came from an unexpected direction: the Beduin tribes of South Jordan – for generations the Hashemite Dynasty's most solid base of support. Unrest among the Beduins, now mostly urbanised, was mainly social in nature – caused by Jordan's economic crisis, the fall in the Dinar's purchasing power, and the harsh austerity imposed on Jordan by the International Monetary Fund. However, in form the South Jordan riots had much in common with the Intifada.

King Hussein, rushing home from a vacation in Britain, was able to contain the unrest by immediately sacking his notoriously corrupt Prime Minister. Hussein also got the valuable support of Arafat, who prevailed upon the Jordanian Palestinians not to challenge the monarchy. To pacify the population King Hussein ushered a policy of political liberalization: alleviating censorship, easing restrictions on political associations, and holding relatively free parliamentary elections.

As it turned out, it was the well-organised Muslim Fundamentalists who made the best use of the new freedom. At the end of an election campaign – centering on social grievances and opposition to the IMF plan as much as on religion, the Muslims emerged as a major political force, inside and outside the new Jordanian parliament. Some of their elected representatives have called for a Jihad against Israel.

Meanwhile, the number of incidents along the Israeli-Jordanian border has increased steadily. A growing number of Jordanian soldiers shoot across the border on their own initiative; in five cases during the last year, Jordanian soldiers crossed the border and carried out raids on Israeli territory or on Israelis in the West Bank. Some of these attacks were religiously-motivated; one infiltrator killed by the Israeli army had recently returned from Afghanistan, where he fought in the ranks of the anti-Soviet Muslim guerrillas. Other attackers were Palestinians, with relatives on the West Bank.

So far, the Israeli and Jordanian authorities have

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striven to localize the incidents. Nevertheless, Defence Minister Rabin made an ominous warning: "We expect more than good intentions from the Jordanian government; we expect it to control its own citizens, and especially the soldiers of its own army".

Ever since the 1950s, when the young King Hussein ascended to the Jordanian throne, predictions of his close demise have been made, periodically; but so far he has weathered all crises and proved himself a past master at the art of survival. However, the veteran King's chances of surviving, over the coming years, are closely bound to developments west of the Jordan river and the ultimate result of the – so far stalled – diplomatic process.

A diplomatic breakthrough in the direction of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Palestinian statehood would greatly increase the King's chances. With the outer arena calmed by some kind of trilateral accommodation between Jordan, Israel and the emerging new Palestine, Hussein will stand a good chance of keeping Jordan's internal crisis away from the boiling point. However, should the diplomatic efforts definitely fail and leave the Palestinians without hope, the resulting backlash might split Jordan wide open. The combination of Palestinian despair, religious fanaticism and social discontent may start an unquenchable flame. Revolution or civil war in Jordan might provide a pretext for the kind of intervention which Ariel Sharon has been advocating for years. Moreover, a conflagration in Jordan could easily spread to neighboring, volatile Saudi Arabia – it is not for nothing that the Saudi royal house is strongly supporting King Hussein's rule.

With a definite failure of the diplomatic peace process, this month's scattered shots across the Jordan River could turn out to be the opening shots in a major Middle East war.

The editor

* According to the Israeli television news of January 26, 1990 far less than one percent of the Soviet Jews arriving in 1988 went to settlements in the Occupied Territories.

Madrid meeting

Between January 18 and 20, a seminar on the Intifada and the Middle East peace process was held in Madrid, under the auspices of the Association of European Journalists' Spanish section. From Israel, Matti Peled and Uri Avnery of the ICIPP participated, along with Dan Leon of New Outlook magazine, Elyahu Cherbekovski, the Israeli representative of the Spanish press agency, and attorney Felicia Langer. East Jerusalem journalist Hana Siniora was present, as was a PLO delegation including Dr. Fathi Arafat, head of the Palestinian Red Crescent and Yasser Arafat's brother; the former Israeli Ilan Halevy; and Fuad Yasin, the de-facto Palestinian Ambassador to Madrid. Among the audience were many members of Madrid's Palestinian community. The Jewish community was mostly absent, although its prominent members had been invited and some of them originally intended to come. Israeli Ambassador Shlomo Ben-Ami sent a polite letter of regret, stating that he was too busy preparing the Madrid visit of Israeli Foreign Minister Arens.

There was an impressive array of European speakers, including a former Spanish Foreign Minister, members of several parliaments, and well-known academic experts.

The following is excerpted from Matti Peled's speech at Madrid.

(...) The machinations of the Israeli government have produced some results for which we should all be grateful. The question of who should speak for the Palestinians has become central in the preliminary negotiations (...).

The United States and Egypt are openly negotiating with the PLO, trying to find a way of allowing the PLO to play a somewhat concealed role in the process. The fact that the PLO is recognized internationally as a legitimate participant in the peace process is not hidden from the eyes of many Israelis, who are less apprehensive than their Prime Minister of the eventual outcome of such participation. (...)

As for Shamir himself, he recently stated that, although he would talk to Satan himself, he would *not* talk to the PLO. The reason he gave was very simple and quite truthful: with the PLO he would have to negotiate the terms of a peace treaty leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West

Bank and the Gaza Strip. What he *would* be willing to discuss with Satan one can only guess. (...)

In the meantime the popular uprising – the Intifada – goes on and has entered its third year; the Israeli repression continues and all parties are suffering and losing in every sense of the word. Seen against the background of the fantastic events in Eastern Europe and the radical changes on the international level, the situation in the Middle East is fast becoming an anachronism. The only hope for a change one can have these days is that the new relations developing between the two super-powers and inside Europe will make the international community more capable of dealing in concert with the situation in the Middle East.

It is no secret that international tension has nourished the Middle East conflict for years. Perhaps it is not too much to expect that the Middle East will benefit from those tremendous changes on the international level. (...)

Kaffeeklatsch

by Malka Gayer

During the first year of the Intifada, several peace groups organised solidarity visits to afflicted Palestinian families and communities in the Occupied Territories on a regular basis. In these visits there was a relatively large participation by Israelis who had not been very involved before in peace activities. Not infrequently these meetings changed their lives: they became activists for peace.

Lately, in the houses of such activists a growing number of gatherings have been organised to convey the experience to more mainstream Israelis. In these "Choogey Bayit" (house meetings) one or two Palestinian speakers are invited to address the peace activists' friends, neighbors, relatives or colleagues who never before drank coffee with "the enemy". So far, the meetings only touch a limited section of both societies: they take place mainly in Israeli middle-class houses, and the Palestinian speakers are highly articulate and well-versed in English. But it is a fact that

many more Israelis have had their first real conversation with Palestinians in this way and the Palestinians have had a wider forum of Israelis with whom to dialogue. Sometimes there is a lot of shouting in these meetings, both among the Israelis and between the Israelis and Palestinians, and a lot of anger is vented. Not so, however, in the meeting of December 2, in the house of Bracha and Ben Yanuv in Herzlia, where an attempt at genuine listening was made.

Women for Coexistence hosted the evening. The Palestinians were a journalist and a Bir Zeit lecturer, contacted through the Twenty-First Year. Altogether there were thirty people present, men and women in roughly equal numbers – among them a number of not so dovish Labor Party members. It was quite significant that on the Israeli side, the women were the ones already used to meeting Palestinians. The questions were asked by the “new-comers”, with the organizing women hoping that their guests would ask their toughest, most agonizing questions and that in this comfortable environment a breakthrough would occur.

The session of questions and answers lasted about two hours, with the Israelis probing the Palestinians, and the Palestinians responding patiently, often humorously in an attempt to convey to their listeners that the only end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the two-state solution. If a big breakthrough did not occur, it could be said that while at the beginning of the evening the Palestinians and Israelis were strangers to each other, at the end there was an open and enthusiastic feeling among people who enjoyed having met each other, and who went home with much to think about.

Here are some of the questions and answers – typical of such first meetings.

Q: If the PLO truly accepts co-existence with Israel, why does it not repudiate its Covenant which explicitly calls for the extermination of Israel? This would win the PLO greater credibility in the Israeli public.

A: At every house meeting I encounter the Israeli fixation on the PLO Covenant. Israelis seem to know this

document better than Palestinians. But as you know, at the Algiers conference the Covenant was amended to accept the existence of Israel side by side with a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Totally repudiating the Covenant would create unnecessary rifts in the PLO coalition; the Covenant is a significant document in the history of the Palestinian struggle for political independence and statehood. Nevertheless the amendment stands and that is our current position. Why is it so difficult for Israelis to relate to the present moderate position of the PLO?

Q: What is the Palestinian position on the negotiability of East Jerusalem?

A: Any solution to the question of Jerusalem must take into account two significant points – the religious needs of the people and the political symbolism of the city. Just as Israelis expect Palestinians to understand their emotions toward Jerusalem, so must the Israelis understand the Palestinians' sensitivities. For the Palestinian people *Al-Kuds* is the heart, the source, the mother. Moreover, the inhabitants of East Jerusalem are an integral part of the Palestinian polity. They refuse to be an “internal Israeli problem”.

Q: To what extent is poverty part of the problem?

A: Under occupation Israel controls all our resources. It confiscates land, subverts our water supply, issues or doesn't issue permits for factories, prevents us from receiving development aid from Arab countries, encourages our intellectual class to emigrate by not providing suitable jobs. In fact, Israel is responsible for keeping us in a state of semi-development so that there will be an available pool of unskilled labor for Israeli industry and services.

Q: If the Palestinians want peace, why do we see only violence and terrorism? Where are the gatherings similar to this one?

A: All the Palestinians want is to live in peace and freedom. But under occupation all political activity is illegal. If there were a meeting like this, the Palestinian participants would all be arrested. Who do you think the deported PLO sympathisers are? Moderate political leaders who have called for a Palestinian state. Who are all the people detained in Ansar-3? Bir Zeit graduates who would otherwise organize and demonstrate for freedom.

Q: Is there no danger that the Intifada will become more violent? Will the PLO use live ammunition?

A: The Palestinians are suffering greatly. We have arms, but so far we are willing to take all the deaths, all the injuries, all the house demolitions and not retaliate with live ammunition. But for how long? People are getting

frustrated. There are not many victories. It depends greatly on what comes out of this latest peace initiative. If it is stalemated as Shamir would have it, who knows what will happen.

For information about house-meetings:

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■ *The following is the report of Anneke Mouthaan, who visited the Shatti Refugee Camp together with Ya'el Koren of Women for Political Prisoners and a Dutch radio-correspondent.*

Driving through the camp we saw that school was over. Children were everywhere. Until then we did not see soldiers, but then suddenly they were there!

At first they rode through the streets shooting in the air. When they saw strangers, among them an obvious journalist with a microphone, they restrained themselves and just drove up and down, in their heavily protected jeeps, armed to the teeth.

We criss-crossed through the camp. We stopped at a place where the taxi driver said a shop-owner had been shot in his head only a few hours ago.

When we got out of the car at the site we saw a jeep standing in the far distance. Suddenly another jeep roared up. At that moment several boys had already clustered around us. Curious, as always but also self-confident. Then suddenly stones started to whizz through the air. The jeep stopped, 10 metres from us, and two soldiers jumped out. One started to shoot, the other tried to catch one of the boys, and succeeded. The boy was dragged into the jeep, and the jeep went off. We saw it all from a half-open door of a drugstore. Women went on and off with worried faces: Whose child was it!

The whole thing took place in a few minutes time. The scene re-occurs every afternoon, when school is over.

The unavoidable dialogue

by Adam Keller

Over the past two years, an active Israeli-Palestinian dialogue has been going on, through many different channels. An increasing number of peace activists and members of oppositional political parties are meeting with PLO officials. Such meetings take place openly, either in defiance of the legal prohibition or by finding a legal loophole to "bend" and circumvent it; the Israeli and Palestinian participants are able to achieve substantial agreement on most features of the peace agreement they seek. Unfortunately, the Israeli side does not represent those in power.

On January 23, several hundreds of right-wing settlers demonstrated in Jerusalem; their leaders told the radio: *We came here because the leftist politicians meet the PLO every day, and nobody is protesting against it. It is becoming a routine!* The settlers' grievances seem to be near the truth; indeed, events such as the visit of Knesset Members Miari and Darawshe to the PLO Tunis headquarters, at the end of December 1989, receive only cursory mention in the media.

According to some accounts, the KM's carried messages to Arafat from senior Israeli politicians. Thus, their visit seems to constitute part of the extensive but elusive contacts with the PLO, carried out by factions of the Israeli government. Officially, such contacts do not exist; the opposition to negotiations with the PLO, in any form, is a central plank in the program of the "National Unity Government", a program supposedly binding on all coalition partners. However, it is an open secret that Israeli official messages to the American and Egyptian governments are immediately transmitted to PLO headquarters, and that many of the diplomatic notes reaching Jerusalem from Washington and Cairo actually originated in Tunis.

In addition, secondary channels of communications were established, via numerous middlemen – European statesmen, members of various Jewish communities, businessmen with commercial contacts in the Arab world, and – last but not least – PLO supporters in the Occupied Territories. Some Israeli citizens, too, were given an official mandate to talk to the PLO, mainly on the possibility for an exchange of prisoners. In January defence Minister Rabin confirmed (after it was leaked to the press) that he had authorised a series of secret visits to PLO headquarters, by the families of Israeli soldiers who are missing since the start of the Lebanon War.

Persistent rumors also tell of numerous meetings of mainstream Israeli politicians with Yasser Arafat and his close advisers.

According to well-connected journalist Smadar Peri (*Yediot Aharonot*, 10.1.90), about a hundred such secret meetings, mostly at Cairo, took place in the last two years – the PLO participants being careful to keep secret the identity of their Israeli interlocutors, and any leaks to the press being completely denied by

the Palestinian as well as the Israeli side.

On December 31, 1989, this shadowy world was suddenly invaded by floodlights. All of a sudden Prime Minister Shamir announced the sacking of Science Minister Weitzman, of the Labor Party, because of Weitzman's contacts with the PLO; in a melodramatic television speech, Shamir charged: "This is a most serious affair, with grave implications for state security; I have definite proof that Weitzman collaborated systematically with our country's worst enemies." Shamir never disclosed officially this alleged evidence, but much of its content was leaked to the press. It seems that Weitzman had met several times with PLO representative Nabil Ramlawi at Geneva; he also maintained constant indirect contact with PLO headquarters, through the services of Dr. Ahmed Tibi, an Israeli Arab who – with tacit official approval – shuttles constantly between Israel and Tunis, carrying messages to and fro.

Among other things, Weitzman's messages were apparently instrumental in preventing the PLO from totally rejecting the "five points" of U.S. Secretary of State Baker. This especially infuriated Shamir, who had hoped to manoeuvre the PLO into a rejectionist position. Finance Minister Shimon Peres, the Labor leader, was apparently involved in at least some of Weitzman's contacts. It seems that the Israeli secret services have maintained extensive surveillance of Ezer Weitzman's movements and telephone calls, and possibly of those of Peres as well.

Shamir's move provoked a sharp coalition crisis. Weitzman's Labor colleagues declared their solidarity with him and their intention to withdraw from the government, unless Weitzman is reinstated. However, the Labor hawks were displeased with this development, which – they feared – would lead to a radical change of the Labor Party's positions, towards acceptance of negotiations with the PLO. The hawks' leader, Defence Minister Yitzchak Rabin, succeeded in stopping the government's break up, and enforcing upon both Shamir and Weitzman a compromise: Weitzman was excluded from the inner cabinet, but retains the science portfolio.

Political commentators were divided regarding the correct assessment of these events. On the one hand, Weitzman was downgraded and forced to make a vague promise to "adhere to the government program". On the other hand, Shamir had to accept the continued holding of a ministerial post by a man whose contacts with the PLO were now no longer secret. Thus, the law prohibiting such contacts was further undermined.

Several Likud hardliners presented complaints to the police against Weitzman, for his alleged law breaking. After several weeks of hesitations, Attorney-General Charish instructed the police to interrogate Weitzman. This sensitive investigation is handled by police chief David Kraus, personally. The issue of this interrogations is still not clear. According to as yet unconfirmed press accounts, the authorities tend to close the case "for lack of evidence" since an attempt to remove Weitzman's immunity and put him on trial may prove extremely explosive, politically as well as judicially.

Both Ezer Weitzman and peace activist Abie Nathan have met with the PLO; yet the one remains a minister, while the other is behind bars. This discrepancy was noted in many newspaper articles, and seems to have increased the amount of public attention for and sympathy with Nathan. In a startling, move extreme-right Knesset Member Rafael Eytan arrived at Eyal prison, and was photographed shaking Nathan's hand. Eytan told the press: "I don't agree with what Abie did, but I do think that an injustice was done to him. After the Weitzman affair, it makes no sense to keep him imprisoned." On Saturday each week, hundreds of people travel the long road to Eyal prison, to demonstrate their solidarity with Abie Nathan. On February 9, when Nathan is due to be released, he is expected to have a hero's welcome at a mass rally, organised by *The Voice of Peace* radio station.

In the wake of the Nathan affair, more and more voices are calling for the abolition of the law under which he was convicted. There is also a growing support for a mass meeting with the PLO to challenge that law.

Among others, the well-known journalist Yesha'yahu ben-Porat of *Yediot Aharonot* publicly called for such

a meeting – a startling departure from his previous positions.

Kibbutz members are organising a "peace caravan" to meet leader Yasser Arafat in Cairo (see *TOI* 39, p.1). The initiative receives enthusiastic support, and hundreds of people already registered – undeterred by Likud Minister Roni Milo, who threatened that "the government will prosecute all law-breakers, however numerous they are". The Palestinian side also responded with great enthusiasm. However, the project has run into difficulties because the Egyptians – under strong diplomatic pressure from the Israeli government – hesitate to approve the Cairo venue, reserved for the official, blocked peace process.

The Egyptians have not yet given their final answer. A definite Egyptian "No" would create serious logistical problems. Due to the very conflict the participants aim to help solve, Israeli citizens can cross no land border but the Egyptian one, and travelling by ship or plane is far more expensive. The organisers are now busily searching for an alternative venue which is still within reach of not-so-rich Israelis.

Contact: "Peace Caravan" c/o Victor Blitt, Kibbutz Ramot Menashe, Doar Na Chevel Megiddo, Israel.

Many of the coalition parties' own voters do not share the government's policy of total opposition towards any possibility of negotiating with the PLO. This was the conclusion of a public opinion poll conducted among a thousand-person sample of the urban Jewish population (*Chadashot* 3.1.1990). I think that we will, in the end, have to start negotiations with the PLO was the opinion of 76% of the Labor voters, 28% of the religious parties' vote, and 24% of those who vote Likud.

Voices of dissent are more and more heard even among political representatives of the Likud

On January 6, Tel-Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat embarrassed his Likud colleagues by declaring: "I am in favor of talking with Arafat. If it was not forbidden by the law, I would meet him myself. In the end Yitzchak Shamir will start negotiations with the PLO in order to bring peace to the Middle East. Only the Likud can make peace." (*Ha'aretz*, 7.1.'90). On February 1, Herzlia Mayor Eli Landau – known as a supporter of hardliner Ariel Sharon – made a similar statement.

As elected mayors with an independent base of support Lahat and Landau are in a good position to speak out freely. Other Likud doves are far more shy, especially since Moshe Amirav was expelled from the party for his meetings with Feisal Hussein (see *TOI* nr 30,

p.11). However, Amirav's comrades are still inside the Likud, and maintain a discussion group which meets despite obstruction by the party's hardliners. One member in this group, social worker Shabtai Amedi, told *Kol Ha'ir* (15.12.'89): *We have different kinds of people in the Likud. There are people who look like extremists at first glance, but when you talk with them you realise they want peace (...). When a bomb exploded, people at the Jerusalem marketplace tried to lynch Arab workers, and it was Likud members who defended the Arabs.*

Dissentient voices

Baruch Abu Hatzira, nicknamed "Baba-Baruch", is the son and spiritual heir of "Baba-Sali", widely venerated among Moroccan Jews as a miracle-working Saint. Pictures of the Baba-Sali are printed in hundreds of thousands of copies and are hanging in homes and shops, to which they are believed to bring good luck. The Baba-Sali's tomb, at the town of Netivot, has become a focus of pilgrimage. The yearly ceremonies on the birthday of the Baba-Sali – presided over by his son – draw tens of thousands of Moroccan Jews from all over Israel, as well as from France, the United States, and – in recent years – also from Morocco itself. Some of the latter pilgrims maintain contacts

with the PLO and, as it turns out, have been passing on messages to Baruch Abu-Hatzira.

On January 16, 1990, Abu-Hatzira was in Egypt, on pilgrimage to the tomb of a Nineteenth Century ancestor. The thousands of gathered pilgrims were startled when Abu-Hatzira, in his sermon, declared: *The leaders of Israel are indoctrinating the people against talking with the PLO, by depicting Arafat as a devil. This is a big mistake. We have to negotiate with Arafat and with the PLO. I now know for sure that such negotiations could lead the inhabitants of our country to a secure future.* Abu-Hatzira's words, published in the religious *Yom-Hashishi* paper, created an uproar – especially among the religious parties' leadership, who have always known Abu-Hatzira as an extreme nationalist. On his return to Israel, Abu-Hatzira set out a curious peace plan, attempting to reconcile Israel-PLO negotiations with the "Greater Israel" ideology. A Palestinian state would be created in the Gaza Strip and in North Sinai, which would be ceded to the Palestinians by Egypt; the West Bank would be annexed to Israel; those of its residents who want to, will go to the Palestinian state, where they will get property equal to that left behind; and those remaining will receive Israeli citizenship (*Chadashot*, 26 January).

On January 29, tens of thousands of pilgrims arrived, as usual, at the yearly Baba-Sali feast at Netivot. Prime Minister Shamir, who took part in previous feasts, boycotted this one, stating *a religious leader who supports negotiations with the PLO will not get government participation in his feast!* However, several other ministers, of both big parties, did participate – including Likud hardliner David Levy.

Asked to comment on Shamir's boycott, Baruch Abu-Hatzira remarked: *It is Shamir's own loss.*

■ The industrial empire owned by the Histadrut Trade Union Federation is in serious trouble, and there is much ado about the possibility of its components being sold to the private sector. One such sale which already took place is that of the Tadiran plant in Afula, which produces air-conditioners. Elko Company – the new owner – is considering transferring the factory to the Jewish settlement of Barkan on the West Bank. Thanks to generous subsidies provided by Minister of Industry Ariel Sharon, the Barkan industrial park is growing rapidly, and an "Intifada-proof" highway (bypassing all Arab villages or towns) connects it directly to Tel-Aviv.

One of the consequences of the transplant would be that the workers in the "Development Town" of Afula (mostly Oriental Jews who arrived in the country in the 1950s) would lose their jobs and that unemployment in the region would rise even higher. This the workers are determined to prevent. They divided themselves into day and night shifts, and stay on guard near the machines. They told the press *we won't allow our factory to be taken to the Territories!*

■ Amir Avramson is one of the Israelis severely wounded in the bus crash of July 1989, caused by a Palestinian desperado. Ever since Avramson is undergoing operations and remains in intensive care. From his hospital bed he sent a letter to the Prime Minister, calling upon him *to open negotiations with the PLO so that there will be no more victims.* On January 12, Israeli television prominently featured Avram-

son, as leading Palestinian activist Feisal Hussein came to visit him in hospital.

■ A few days later, the same Feisal Hussein was detained by the police "on suspicion of financing a terrorist cell". At the court, where he was remanded in custody, the handcuffed Hussein was assaulted by thugs, with the police watching. During the three days of Hussein's detention, several protest gatherings – of Peace Now and others – took place in front of his prison. With strong protests coming also from the United States – who regarded it as another move by the Israeli government to undermine the peace process – Hussein was released on the fourth day. A few hours after his release, Hussein was already busily addressing a meeting of Israeli Labor Party members.

■ On December 21, Hebrew University Prof. Charles Greenbaum called upon social scientists to monitor human rights violations in the Occupied Territories. In his speech at a joint conference of the psychology and sociology departments, he claimed that doing so is dictated by the scientists' ethical code. However, the next speaker at the conference, Prof. Dan Hurvitz, was totally opposed to these ethics, arguing that academics should not take actions leading to their being identified with the left, *since this could endanger the university's budgets.*

■ Since January 1988, members of Dai Lakibush (Down with the Occupation) have been holding a vigil in Tel-Aviv every Thursday afternoon. The anniversary vigil, on January 18, was suddenly disrupted by municipal workers, who claimed that the spreading of leaflets violates a municipal by-law against littering. One of the demonstrators, 65-year old Moshe Goldschlager was fined 150 Shekel (about \$75). He refused to pay. The lawyers of the Association for Civil Rights agreed to conduct a judicial struggle against this infringement of the freedom of expression.

■ On January 15, the student group Ometz intended to hold on the Hebrew University campus a memorial for the Intifada victims and light 700 candles. About a hundred Jewish and Arab students gathered

for the memorial; they were confronted by a similar number of the right-wing students of the Gilead group. Suddenly, university security men appeared on the scene and prohibited the candle lighting which, they claimed, could start a fire. The students agreed to light a single candle only; when it was lighted, several right-wingers assaulted the student holding it. Thereupon, a general confrontation started, with the two groups engaging in fist-fights, and being broken up by police half an hour later.

Following the incident, the dean of students took several punitive measures. Students Yuri Pines and Musi Raz – who had been among the organizers – were suspended from studies for three months. Furthermore, she prohibited Ometz from holding any kind of activity on campus for the next two months, and imposed a general prohibition on any political activities whatsoever "until things cool down".

■ (Anneke Mouthaan) Saturday, 20 January, 40 members of Kav Adom (Red Line) – a group of (Jewish) Kibbutzniks and (Arab) townspeople as well as villagers from the Gallilee – traveled together in an Arab bus toward Jenin the West Bank. The first stop was the mountain village Taibeh which from the many flags and roadblocks seemed quite a militant place. Clothing and medicines were unloaded, and the doctors and nurses in the group got off the bus. A briefing was given on the situation in Taibeh. The well-known stories of humiliation and violence against young and old by the soldiers, complaints also about the civil administration, the cutting off of electricity and water, the lack of medical care, the total absence of road maintenance etc. This contact and the opportunity to speak out is a most important aspect of actions like these.

On the way to the next village we were stopped by some 80 kids, boys and young men shouting, singing and waving flags.

Then to Jenin, and the refugee camp in which 7000 people live. Inside the camp: open sewerage. We passed the prison with the tents. At the UNWRA building, unloading of sacks of clothing, briefing on the situation there, the problems, the

number of victims. There was a specially urgent request to provide more legal assistance.

Jenin has been under curfew starting daily at half past four more than 50 days. The intended walk through the camp was canceled because of tensions with the soldiers (and perhaps also with more extremist Palestinians). We went back to Taibeh to pick up the medical team and were offered a tasty meal before departing.

On the nine o'clock television news of that day, the willingness of Israeli doctors and nurses to give voluntary medical help to Palestinians made quite an impressive news item.

Military protests

■ On December 29, hundreds of Yesh G'vul supporters and European peace activists climbed the mountain overlooking military prison no.6; they called slogans supporting imprisoned soldiers who had refused to serve in the Occupied Territories. A day later, the governmental Nature Preservation Authority accused Yesh G'vul of damaging the mountain's vegetation and asked the police to prevent further demonstrations.

At the same time, the Prison authorities started acts of harassment against the imprisoned refusers. Two of them were sent to work at a military camp some fifteen kilometres from the prison; when they went to buy a pizza at a kiosk near the camp, they were accused of attempting to escape and were given an additional three weeks imprisonment each. Later, one of them, Alon Melamed, was also denied medicine when he was ill.

■ At the beginning of January, conscript soldier Gil Komar was on duty as a disk jockey at *Galey Tzahal*, the Israeli army's radio station. After putting on a song entitled "Things will be all right", Komar remarked "Yes, things will be all right after the army leaves the Occupied Territories". One listener was not pleased and lodged a complaint. On January 12, Komar was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment 'for violating the regulations concerning military radio operators'. The army spokesman stated that Komar already had four convictions

for similar offences and was strictly warned not to repeat them.

■ Reserve soldiers serving in the Bethlehem area demand the replacement of their deputy regimental commander, who had killed a Palestinian boy without justification. According to the soldiers' account the regiment was called on January 16 to Husan village, whose inhabitants held a demonstration. In military terms, this was a "marginal incident" which does not warrant shooting. Nevertheless, the deputy regimental commander aimed his rifle, which was equipped with telescopic sights, and fired from a distance of 20 metres; 18-year old Yusef Hatem Shusha was hit by a "plastic" bullet and died immediately. In a letter, published by Ratz Knesset Member Ran Cohen, the soldiers stated that they had served in the Territories many times and never killed a demonstrator, and concluded: *We are not willing to serve any more under such a commanding officer.*

■ Discontent in the army also finds expressions other than political. The Israeli press is repeatedly reporting feelings of frustration spreading among the reserve soldiers, who feel that the burden of fighting the Intifada is spread unequally, some soldiers being called again and again to service in the Occupied Territories. At the units, the young (often female) officers placed in charge of mobilising reserve soldiers come under heavy pressure and are, occasionally, physically assaulted by called-up reservists.

Recently, an association of reserve soldiers was formed, whose members demand that their representatives be allowed to participate in the allocation of the burden, and that consideration be taken of reservists whose livelihood is threatened by repeated call-ups. So far, the authorities' only response was a vague promise to "look into the complaints".

■ 19-year old G.M. (*full name withheld at his request*) is a "Border Guard", member of the special unit entrusted with "restoring order". For the last year, he had been serving in the town of Hebron on the West Bank. During the dispersal of a demonstration on January 5,

he shot – and wounded a little girl. A few hours later, he informed his commanding officer that he refuses to continue serving in the Occupied Territories. He was immediately imprisoned for a period of 35 days.

A mother's struggle

Efrat Spiegel, 56, Israeli-born, a former kindergarten teacher and aliya agent to Chile in the 1950s, has been the sole support for herself and her three children since the death of her husband in 1971. She has made quite a career as an international telephone operator for the Bezeq Telephone Co, thus allowing her children to study and grow up with expectations.

In 1983 Yoav, her second son was killed in Lebanon at age 21. Since then she and her elder son Ehud have become part of the scene in peace demonstrations.

Recently, Efrat was in the news because of her appeal to the Supreme Court to have the text changed on Yoav's tomb in the military graveyard. It now says "killed during the 'Operation Peace for Galilee'" (this was the government's name for the Lebanon War). Efrat demands that it be changed to "killed during the Lebanon War". Beate Keizer spoke with her.

"When Yoav was killed there were thousands of red baretts on his funeral. A special aircraft brought the whole regiment from Lebanon.

Until then, I had been absorbed single-mindedly by the worries of daily life and raising my children alone. When my little son, Yoav, had to go to elementary school he went to a boarding school – there was no other solution. Afterwards he went to navigation school, but he did not want to do his military service in the navy. He wanted to be a paratrooper and serve his country in the most demanding unit. He completed officer's training, and in the middle of his voluntary year he was killed.

From the beginning of the Lebanon War I was wondering: Why this war? For the first time in my life I started to distrust what I heard on the radio and what I read in the papers. The Six Day War left us with the impression

that our side gives always the right information. But then it was easy: everybody in the country was convinced that we were "right" and, moreover, we were winning. Simple people like me were influenced by this atmosphere. I did not understand that on the 7th day we failed to start the campaign for peace. The whole people missed it. We did not understand that we had to negotiate with our neighbors. We dreamed of Greater Israel.

Then some people began to think. A few high school students wrote "a letter of concern" to Golda Meir after she refused the mediation of international Jewish leader Nahum Goldman, who wanted to speak with Nasser. Golda Meir reacted by calling the kids traitors, and that was the start of a general trend of deligitimizing dissidents. I must admit that I also believed that the students were traitors. Who has the right to say anything against the government? What the media tell us is the truth. We have to believe it. I was reacting as everybody did. The first crack in our beliefs occurred in 1973, during the Yom Kippur War: not everything that the government does is correct...

In 1982 at the start of the Lebanon War they wanted us to forget the whole year of cease-fire with the PLO at the northern border. I still believed Begin about the 40 kilometres. But every day 40 kilometres more? Where will it end! They are near Beirut, where do the 40 kilometres end? Beirut was bombed, and Yoav came home on a first vacation. I asked him about the 40 kilometres. He said to me: *Mother, you have no idea what is happening there. It is one big mess.* While driving in an armoured car they themselves heard on the transistor radio Begin's voice "Only 40 kilometres". At that moment they were already in Demur which is 70 kilometres from Israel's northern border. I asked him: what did you feel then? *Mother, don't ask. They cheated us.*

You can cheat everybody, the whole nation, but not the soldiers who fight! Are they idiots? This was the first time that I realised *everybody is lying; I didn't trust the government anymore; but if I don't trust them I have to fight them!* I

became member of Parents Against Silence. I told Yoav that I was going to demonstrations against the war in which he was fighting. He told me: *I beg you to do it. In my position I can't do anything. But you can go and shout in the streets.* I said that I preferred him to sit in prison for refusing to serve in this war. He said: *Mother, you educated me to shoulder responsibility. I am an officer. For the soldiers I am like a father. How can I leave them?* I respected his decision. He was very loyal to his country, but the country betrayed him. He was educated to go, to do his duty. Everybody has to know that they have rights and duties. Maybe we were wrong. The state also has duties to the citizens. Q: *Do you feel you should have educated him differently?*

That is an abstract question. I think the way I am acting now is according to the will which Yoav left me. I owe it to him to have the lie on his grave rectified. Every week I see how he is buried under this lie. The Lebanon War had nothing to do with "Peace for the Galilee". If I will not do it, my whole life becomes pointless. *I believe we have to do everything to bring peace.* And as citizens we have the duty to do everything to let the truth come out. After I read the revelations of Ehud Ya'ari and Ze'ev Shif about the Lebanon War, and also what Shimon Shiffer wrote, I was astonished. I expected that either the writers would be put on trial for telling lies or that a Commission of Inquiry would be formed to investigate the truth about the war. But nothing happened! I started to write letters to Shamir and Peres asking for such a commission. After that I was standing every week in Jerusalem in front of the Prime Minister's house with a placard saying: *I am the mother of Yoav Spiegel who was killed in the Lebanon War. I demand a Commission of Inquiry into the Lebanon War!*

Q: *How did your friends react?* 'You are mad!' 'Do you have nothing else to do?' And my mother, who is 76, if she would hear that last week I went to the West Bank to meet Palestinians, she would kill me.

The Supreme Court postponed the decision about the words on Yoav Spiegel's tombstone for 60 days.

Women go for Peace

Compiled from material provided by Sue Katz, Malka Gayer and Beate Keizer

December 29 – the women's day of the Israeli-Palestinian-European 1990: Time for Peace campaign. The morning opened with a conference organized by the Israeli umbrella organization Women and Peace. There was seating for 700, but more than double that number arrived.

The first panel discussion featured Italian, North American, and local women peace activists, including Jewish Israelis and Palestinians from both sides of the "Green Line". All of them presented relevant analyses of the interconnections between women's work for peace and our own struggle for our own liberation. After a break, a long series of speakers provided briefer expositions of this theme, interspersed with entertainment by prominent local entertainers. The assembly was addressed by women representing a wide range of political ideology, including feminists, religious, left-wing, and establishment women, all united in their opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and calling for negotiations with the PLO towards a two-state solution.

As one of the panel speakers, Naomi Chazan made an appeal to the women present in such an overwhelming number to make their force felt politically. Chazan – who is a professor of Social Sciences at Hebrew University – centered upon the "3Ms" – message, mobilization and means.

There was the hair-raising personal story of Naila A'ish, about her imprisonment while pregnant, miscarriage following the beatings during the interrogations, and the subsequent deportation of her husband, whom she is prevented from visiting. She sees her case as but one example of the acute suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation.

Dalia Landau, from Ramle, also presented a personal story. In 1967 she was confronted with the former Palestinian owners of the house in which she lives, who were expelled in 1948. The two families developed ties, and Dalia was deeply shocked to learn that one of the Arab family's members placed a bomb in a Jerusalem supermarket. She called upon women to practice compassion daily in order to overcome the forces of hatred that tear apart the two peoples.

For Israeli television, the most striking event seemed to be the speech of Masha Lubelski, head of the women's organization of the Histadrut trade union federation. Part of her speech was broadcast in the news of that Friday evening. More important than what she actually said at the conference was the very fact of such a senior member of the Labor Party establishment associating herself with it.

At one-o'clock the conference participants met with many hundreds of other women for a united **Women in Black** vigil, combining the forces of the twenty-four separate vigils held weekly around the country with the strength of our European visitors. We were close to 2000 women, all dressed in black, ranged around a central Jerusalem square, a most impressive and aesthetic vision. The extensive press coverage, including film shot from a helicopter, only foreshadowed the splash our march was to make.

Following this powerful vigil, we set out for our march from Israeli West Jerusalem to Palestinian East Jerusalem. Picking up women all along the way, we were met, as we entered East Jerusalem, by a massive contingent of Palestinian participants from the Territories, who moved in to take the lead. By the time we arrived to the El-Hakawati theatre we were 7000 women strong, at least tripling our most optimistic expectations.

Then the appearance of a single Palestinian flag was used by the police as a sign to start shooting tear gas. Several dozens of the participants, of at least six different nationalities, were detained and beaten with clubs inside the police car.

Among the imprisoned was Dacchia Valent. When she tried to present her passport, policemen spit on it. Dacchia is black! Afterwards, when it was found out that she was an Italian member of the European Parliament, the police wanted to release her as quick as possible. But Dacchia refused to go before the others - including the Palestinians who were treated more harshly. The police was embarrassed enough to ask the help of human-rights lawyer Leah Tzemel, and PLP Knesset Member Muhammad Miari (who were among the demonstrators outside the Russian Compound police station) in order to convince the V.I.P.

to be released from custody. After several Embassadors' complaints, the Israeli Foreign Ministry criticised the police for this arrest.

The police harassment could not dull the feeling - shared by all - of having managed, beyond expectation, what the volunteer organizers had worked for so hard: to demonstrate, in a powerful way, that Israeli and Palestinian women, with the firm support of women from the international community, are "going for peace".

Time for tear gas

The "1990: Time for Peace" campaign simultaneously introduced two new elements into the Israeli political discourse: direct involvement of the European peace movement, as well as cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian activists on a more large-scale than ever before. A month before it took place, the planned happening was already the subject of debate - and of high-level obstruction.

Two of the European organisers, Jean-Marie Lambert of Geneva and Finnish parliamentarian Mikko Lohikoski, were turned back at Ben-Gurion Airport; a Soviet delegation was only spared such treatment because of the frail Israeli-Soviet rapprochement. Many other European participants were harassed at the airport, on both arrival and departure; hundreds of Italian peace activists, who were subjected to searches and hours-long interrogations, held an impromptu protest demonstration at the terminal.

Immediately following the foreign activists' arrival in Israel, soldiers at the Erez roadblock - the one and only entrance to the Gaza Strip - were instructed to admit no bearers of foreign passports. Several delegations did, however, succeed in visiting the West Bank, which cannot be sealed so easily. At Dheishe Refugee Camp, a Palestinian activist, serving as a guide to an American group, was arbitrarily detained - together with two Americans who protested at his arrest.

The first outbreak of open police violence was at December 29, when thousands of demonstrating women arrived at the East Jerusalem El-

Hakawati theatre (see the article 'Women go for Peace').

Saturday, December 30, was to be the climax of the three-days action: a human chain was planned, stretching around the walls of the Old City. This chain had been organized in cooperation by the European groups, the Israeli Peace Now movement and Palestinian activists headed by Feisal Hussein.

As later revealed, at the end of November Prime Minister Shamir entrusted Ehud Olmert, Minister for Arab Affairs, with coordinating initiatives aimed at preventing the peace demonstration centered on the Old City. Olmert convened a meeting, including high-level representatives of the police, the Shabak (*security service*) and the Attorney-General's office. The Shabak presented evidence purporting to prove that the demonstration "is being covertly organised by the PLO". However, State Attorney Dorit Beinisch was of the opinion that this evidence was not strong enough to stand the Supreme Court's scrutiny - a position backed also by Justice Minister Dan Meridor. Thereupon, Police Chief David Kraus declared that he would grant a permit to hold the demonstration to Peace Now (which represented towards the authorities the whole multinational coalition) unless ordered otherwise by an explicit resolution of the government's inner cabinet*.

On the days preceding December 30, there had been intense discussions between the Israeli, Palestinian and European organisers. Common slogans were agreed upon: "Two states for two peoples", "Peace Talks with the PLO", and "Respect for human and civil rights".

Peace Now placed large advertisements in the daily papers, with the call *Give peace a hand!* and rented buses to bring people from all over the country to Jerusalem. The Palestinian organisers, too, were mobilising - but the government found ways of obstruction: the army was instructed by Defence Minister Rabin to block, on December 30, all roads leading from the West Bank to Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem police cancelled all weekend leaves; thousands of policemen were mobilised "to keep order at the demonstration", and

were instructed to disperse anybody "throwing stones or waving Palestinian flags", as well as persons "shouting nationalist slogans" (referring, of course, to *Palestinian* nationalist slogans).

Along the eastern, southern and western walls, things went according to plan. Despite the roadblocks, there were many thousands of Palestinians - inhabitants of East Jerusalem itself and West Bankers who had come to Jerusalem on the previous day. Israelis, Palestinians and Europeans held hands for nearly two hours, in what seemed a smiling, good-natured though a bit boring demonstration; the most exciting event was to be the simultaneous release of thousands of balloons into the Jerusalem air. Only gradually did confused rumors and the smell of tear gas make clear that, on the northern side of the Old City, events have taken a completely different course.

At its northern stretch, between Damascus Gate and Herod's Gate, the wall of the Old City borders on modern Arab Jerusalem - the quarter in which are located the editorial offices of Palestinian newspapers, the headquarters of trade unions and other associations. Its inhabitants are the veterans of many demonstrations, which are always dispersed by the police. On December 30, a legal demonstration was to be held there - for practically the first time since the imposition of Israeli rule in 1967. The inhabitants turned up, in their thousands. The Palestinian organisers made great efforts not to provoke the police. No stones were thrown, nor were there any Palestinian flags. However, not even their own respected leaders could stop some of the Palestinian youths from calling "Long live the PLO" and singing the Palestinian anthem "Biladi" (My Country). Thus, the police had found the "nationalist slogans" it was looking for.

Already at the beginning of the demonstration, a group of Palestinian youths, who were standing near the Israelis and Europeans, were violently dispersed. With the mediation of knesset members, the demonstration resumed; the human chain was again formed, with all participants shouting in English

We want peace. However, the police was becoming increasingly hostile, and all along the northern wall small incidents broke out, with the Peace Now leaders acting as a "fire brigade" and moving from one trouble spot to another.

A few minutes before the demonstration was due to end, some Palestinians at Herod's Gate raised on their shoulders a seven-year old girl, who was holding a Peace Now poster and was dressed in a camouflage uniform like the ones worn by the PLO fighters. The police officer on the spot regarded this as a final proof that the demonstration is "in support of anti-Israeli terrorism", and ordered his men to charge. Within seconds, the whole two-kilometre stretch between Damascus and Herod's Gates became the scene of total police rampage: police horsemen galloped and their clubs landed on heads; heavy tear gas clouds filled the air; fleeing demonstrators were shot in the back with "plastic" bullets. The police's "anti-terrorist unit" busily smashed the cameras of press photographers and beat them up; several knesset members were beaten as well. Some Italian demonstrators fled into the nearby "Pilgrim's Palace" Hotel, followed by the police's relentless water cannon; strong water spouts broke the hotel windows, and one of the flying glass splinters tore out the right eye of 40-year old Maritza Manno. The police did not rest until all demonstrators have escaped - except for the dozens who were either detained or hospitalized.

For the Palestinian participants, there was no great novelty in the police's behaviour; but most Israelis had never before met such brutality, being used to the police's mild behaviour at all previous Peace Now demonstrations. Many of them reacted with shock and outrage.

A very intense public debate ensued. The police announced, one day afterwards, that it had made an investigation and found that all the policemen acted correctly. Later it turned out, however, that this "investigation" was based solely on the testimonies of the policemen themselves.

During the following days Peace Now leaders were again and again quoted on television, expressing

unprecedented criticism of the police behavior. A press conference was organized in which eyewitnesses testified. Further testimonies were collected by Peace Now lawyers, totalling fifty three. Following a fierce debate at the Knesset Interior Committee, the police was forced to reopen its investigation. The Peace Now leadership believes that the police will pinpoint several lower level policemen, who will be made into scapegoats, but that the real responsibility for what they believe was a deliberate provocation will not be allocated - since an independent, thorough investigation cannot be conducted under the present political conditions.

A change in the consciousness of the Israeli participants and the deepening of solidarity between Israelis and Palestinians are probably the most significant result of the "Time for Peace" campaign.

The official account published by Peace Now, including eyewitness reports, is available from the Peace Now office, 177 Ben Yehuda St., Tel-Aviv 63472

** The details were disclosed by Minister Olmert himself, at sessions of the Knesset Interior Affairs Committee which investigated the December 30 events.*

Youth in protest

by Ronnie Wagner

Slightly more than two years ago, we - a group of sixteen boys and girls - sent a letter to Defence Minister Rabin in which we told him that, once conscripted, we would refuse to participate in acts of occupation and oppression. This letter came out of debates and discussions lasting over two months, regarding "the limits of obedience". The group was politically heterogeneous, including members of the Communist Youth, Hashomer-Hatza'ir and the Jewish-Arab 'Re'ut' (Fellowship) youth movement.

The text finally adopted was a compromise, designed to be acceptable both to youths refusing any kind of military service in the Occupied Territories and to those refusing only to participate in specific acts of oppression.

On October 29, 1987, we sent the letter to Rabin and informed the press about it. On the following day we were surprised to find ourselves



on the front pages. We were a prominent item on television and radio, and also in the schools and youth movements. The media was interested in us precisely because we were youths. Youths in Israel are expected to follow their elders and take up the burden of soldiering without complaint.

In the past two years we organised meetings at schools and youth movement branches, held vigils and protest actions, and supported our six imprisoned comrades. We continued to collect signatures and periodically presented them to the Defence Ministry. Starting with 16 signatures we now have 280. When we presented the last 30 signatures we held a demonstration linking the brutality in the Occupied Territories with the cases of soldier suicide, which got much publicity.

The High School Group limits itself to the area of military refusal. Many youths felt the need for an organization with a more comprehensive interest. The new radical left-wing youth group Chafarperet (the Mole) was created. Its founders came from Re'ut, with its emphasis on purely social contacts between Jewish and Arab youths. Others had been in the Ratz and Communist youth movements.

Experience in their previous movements led the founders to conclude that in an organization or party dominated by adults, youths would always remain in an inferior position: they would be expected to become "educated" into the parent party's ideology; their positions and views would be considered of little consequences compared with those of the "more experienced"; they would be expected to serve as "foot-soldiers" in campaigns (particularly election campaigns) planned and directed by grown-up "generals". Only when the youths would lead their own struggle against oppression in the schools, in the youth movements and inside the peace movement itself, would they be respected.

We conduct two kinds of regular meetings - political lectures, which are open to the general young public, and action meetings, at which activ-

ities are decided upon. The two kinds of activity are interdependent: for example, at the time when we had a series of lectures about education, the action meetings were mainly concerned with creating cells in the schools.

Adam Keller in prison

On February 4, Adam Keller was sentenced to 28 days imprisonment, after he arrived at his military unit and declared his refusal to perform reserve military service. Once in prison he was forced to wear the I.D.F. uniform and was put in isolation. On February 5, he started a hungerstrike.

During his trial Adam stated:

"The I.D.F. was founded as the Israeli Defence Forces, but it has become the Israeli Occupation Forces, an instrument to oppress another people.

"I refuse to be a smoothly working cog in that machinery. I can't serve in this army anymore, not even in its backyard.

"A situation in which the killing of children has become a daily routine, does not leave me any choice. After the army's Supreme Command has granted a pardon to soldiers who have beaten to death a father in front of his children, I am no longer willing to wear the I.D.F. uniform."

Letters of protest to: Minister Yitzchak Rabin, Kirya, Tel-Aviv (copy to P.O.B. 956, Tel-Aviv 61008).

Letters of support to: Adam Keller, personal number 2213693, Military postal code 03734, Israel.

(Since the staff of The Other Israel is also engaged in supporting Adam's struggle, the publication of next issue might be subject to delay.)

The Editorial Board.

We started with a very general position of opposition to occupation and to racism. During the first year, we adopted several position papers: on the Intifada, on the organising of youths and on our position in the peace movement.

We take a position of solidarity towards the Intifada. We participate in solidarity actions, we also have meetings with Palestinians from

the Occupied Territories. We do not support a specific solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We have decided that the specific solution is less important than intensifying the struggle against the occupation, and that before we talk of any solution, we must convince the public - and especially the youth - that the occupation is bad. We support the creation of a pluralistic peace movement, in which many groups will maintain their own activities, while joint demonstrations will have slogans expressing the common denominator of all, and with which all opponents of the occupation can identify - from Labor Party doves to the anti-Zionist 'Matzpen'.

We support the creation of wider independent youth groups to lead the struggle for our rights. In the schools, we work to create alternative student councils, which will really fight for their constituents rather than be the principal's rubber stamp. As a logical consequence of these positions, members of the Chafarperet were active in creating "Youth Against the Occupation" (YAO). This is a coalition of nearly all the left-wing youth groups and movements. Over the last month and half, YAO held regular weekly vigils in Tel-Aviv and Haifa; a similar vigil is now starting in Jerusalem, with slogans like "Youths against the occupation", "Start negotiations with the PLO", and "Money for education, not for occupation".

As happened with the letters to Rabin, our vigils attract a lot of attention, just because they are Youths Vigils. We encounter scorn, and physical violence, but we persevere and come again, week after week. We want to show everybody that youths have something to say, and more important, that youths have the right to express their feelings and opinions in an independent, strong and clear way.

Ronnie Wagner wrote this article on the very last day before he was conscripted by the Israeli army.

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