

# The Other Israel

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## OCCUPATION IS OCCUPATION

For several decades, Israelis have become used to regarding war as a faraway phenomenon, and to relying on the absolute superiority of the Israeli Air Force to keep the sky free of enemies. With the onset of the Gulf Crisis, and Saddam Hussein's dire threats, the Israelis suddenly faced the imminent threat of an attack by poison-gas-loaded missiles. The prospective victims failed to be cheered up by the possibility of an Israeli nuclear retaliation upon Bagdad.

Israelis clamored for the gas masks which – it was promised – were stockpiled in government warehouses<sup>1</sup>; but the Defence Ministry proclaimed that the masks' distribution would be "premature" and "cause panic". Thereupon, gas masks made good sales on the free market, at prices of up to 4,000 Shekels (\$2,000) for the best ones (made in Germany). Those who could not afford such expenses had to content themselves with baking soda – which product was said on television to be capable of countering the effects of poison gas, when cloth soaked in it is held properly near mouth and nose.

The first half of August 1990 was a time of low ebb for the Israeli peace movement. With the rapid American military build-up, the outbreak of war seemed imminent. Various grim possibilities were mentioned, especially in connection with the unstable situation in Jordan – the country constituting a fragile buffer between Israel and Iraq. It was none other than Ratz Knesset Member Yossi Sarid, who – on the very day of the Kuwait invasion – stated publicly: *Israel must declare that the entry of Iraqi forces into Jordan would constitute a casus belli*. A few days later, Sarid's suggestion was followed by Defence Minister Arens, who proclaimed it to be the official government policy<sup>2</sup>. The Labor Party, of course, fell in. Thus, for the first time since June 1982, an atmosphere of "national consensus" was created in Israel. As a result, non-monarchist Israelis find themselves praying feverently for the personal and political survival of King Hussein of Jordan.

The possibility of the Israeli army entering Jordan started to whet the Israeli Right's appetite for "an even Greater Israel". The Techiya Party's leader,

Ge'ulah Cohen – a Deputy Minister in the Shamir government – already stated in the Knesset: *If the Iraqis enter Jordan and our army goes after them, the territory should never be given back to King Hussein!* (Ha'aretz, 16.8.1990).

Talk was also heard about carrying out a massive "transfer" of Palestinians, while the world's attention is concentrated on the Gulf: An unnamed aide of Prime Minister Shamir was quoted as saying: *If we have war with Iraq and the Arabs make trouble behind our lines, they will soon find themselves outside* (Ha'aretz, 17.8.1990).

The nationalist agitation was further increased when – four days after the invasion of Kuwait – the bodies of two Jewish boys, stabbed to death, were found in Jerusalem. As usual in such cases, the murderers were – ahead of any proof – assumed to be Palestinian. For several days, racist mobs ran amok through the streets of Jerusalem, stoning and burning Arab cars and beating up their passengers – with the police present and doing nothing, and only a few isolated individuals trying to stem the tide<sup>3</sup>. Nor were the gangs influenced by public appeals to desist, made by the father and brother of one of the murdered boys. Dozens of Palestinians who happened to fall into the racists' hands (as well as two Pakistani tourists) had to be hospitalized; one Palestinian died of his wounds.

The Jerusalem pogroms increased the feeling of bitterness and frustration among the Palestinians, who already contrasted President's Bush's vigorous campaign on behalf of occupied Kuwait with his opposition to even a U.N. fact-finding mission to occupied Palestine. It is hardly surprising that many Palestinians, feeling betrayed by the International Community, chose to adopt Saddam as their champion. The Palestinian leadership – both at PLO headquarters and in the Occupied Territories – tried to maintain a nuanced position, condemning the American intervention but also opposing the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait; but in many of the Palestinian demonstrations which broke out, photographs of Saddam Hussein and Iraqi flags were carried, and the Iraqi President got the unmitigated adoration of the masses.

In the Israeli media and politics, these pro-Saddam

demonstrations were used in order to rebuild the tattered "Palestinian terrorist" image. This tendency effected even parts of the left, such as Ratz KM Yossi Sarid, with his long record in the peace movement. On August 17, Sarid published an article in *Ha'arets* entitled "Let them try to find me", in which he announced the total breaking off of his contacts with all Palestinians. Sarid's article was welcomed with glee by the extreme right; however, the shock of it also helped the peace movement to get out of its mood of depression and hopelessness. One by one, speakers of the left condemned Sarid's position and reasserted the vital need of continuing dialogue with the Palestinians; Sarid found himself in the minority even within his own party.

On September 19, sixteen dovish Knesset members published an advertisement, reaffirming their commitment to maintain the dialogue; Sarid was among the signatories. A few days later, the dialogue was officially re-launched, with Palestinian activists Feisal Hussein and Rasan El-Hatib addressing a large Peace Now meeting in Jerusalem. However, considerable time and effort are still necessary to fully rebuild trust.

Upon assuming the Defence Ministry, Moshe Arens instituted a new policy in the Occupied Territories: the regular military patrols in the refugee camps – which involved daily confrontations with the population – were discontinued; the army limited itself to keeping the main roads open, with only occasional raids into some villages. The number of Palestinian casualties dropped drastically; the Intifada disappeared from the media – and some Israelis believed it to have died out altogether.

On September 20, there was a grim reminder. Amnon Pomerantz, a 46-year old reserve soldier, blundered by mistake into the El-Bureij Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip. Surrounded by stone throwing Palestinians, Pomerantz tried to turn his car – and hit two youths, who fell bleeding to the ground. Thereupon, the enraged crowd poured petrol upon the car, and set it on fire.

At his funeral, Pomerantz's mother cried out: *Who the hell needs Gaza!* But for the political right, the El-Bureij killing provided a new opportunity to demand revenge and retaliation. El-Bureij Camp was placed under tight curfew; rumors filtering out of the besieged camp told of the massive destruction of houses by army bulldozers. The Israeli Civil Rights

Association obtained a temporary injunction from the Supreme Court. However, the judges were convinced by a army general who told them that *the house destructions are not a punishment, but an urgent military operation which must not be put off.*

Therefore, the Supreme Court lifted the injunction and allowed the army to go on; altogether, 34 houses were destroyed. The judges did order the authorities to grant compensations and alternative housing to the destroyed houses' residents.

Whatever the ultimate outcome of the Gulf Crisis, the Israeli government has already made some short-term propaganda successes, managing to rub some of Saddam's "Hitler" image onto Arafat. Moreover, Saddam Hussein's threats to use gas against Israel evoked Holocaust memories and guilt feelings in the West; after many years of being an undoubted "Goliath", Israel can again be credibly depicted as a potential victim.

However, the government is far from reassured about the future of its "Greater Israel" project. The claim of Israel to be "America's strategic asset in the Middle East" (and therefore deserving of unlimited military, political and financial aid) has been considerably damaged by the Gulf Crisis. The Israeli government's attempts to get included in the mobilisation of "The Free World" were, politely but firmly, rejected by Washington; any Israeli involvement in the confrontation would play into Saddam Hussein's hands. Bush needed – and found – Arab allies; and once the Gulf Crisis is resolved, these allies will be in a position to demand that the U.S. re-start and accelerate the peace process.

At the time of writing, the Gulf Crisis has already dragged on for two months. War can burst out at any moment. Such a war, with its totally unpredictable outcome would bring disaster upon the inhabitants of the Middle East – be they Iraqi or Israeli, Kuwaiti or Palestinian; many who live elsewhere will be hit, too, directly or indirectly. A negotiated settlement – including Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, American withdrawal from Saudi Arabia, UN-supervised free elections in Kuwait, and the nuclear, chemical and biological disarmament of the Middle East – could provide a powerful impetus for the peaceful resolution of other regional conflicts. The stakes are extremely high – for the Middle East and for the entire world.

The editor

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1. On October 1, as this issue was going into print, the government suddenly announced that gas masks will be distributed "in a gradual and orderly way" to the population. Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, it was announced, will also be entitled to masks, but, unlike Israelis, will have to pay the full commercial price.

2. In fact, Israeli governments since the 1950's were opposed to the entry of Iraqi or Syrian forces into Jordanian territory. However, this policy was never, until now, proclaimed in public. Moreover, between 1967 and 1970 considerable Iraqi forces were present in Jordan, and Israel did not start a war to evict them.

3. An army officer – on leave from service in the Gaza Strip – tried to prevent an Arab from being assaulted, and was himself assaulted.

Avi Alzam, head of the Shmu'el Hanavi Neighborhood Council, was stabbed after calling upon his neighbors to stop attacking Arabs.

At the end of August, the Jerusalem peace groups united in establishing a 'fire brigade', which would be prepared to act should a similar outbreak recur; the volunteers would drive to the scene, place themselves between the mob and the attacked Palestinians and offer them a temporary refuge in private homes. Also, the volunteers present on the scene would expose any police passivity.

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### The Gulf Crisis and the Palestinian Question

Second part of Matti Peled's speech at the 7th UN NGO's conference at Geneva, delivered on August 30.

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(...) The basic mistake of those Israelis who presume to judge the conduct of the Palestinian leadership in the Kuwaiti crisis is that they are assuming that the Palestinian question stands on Kuwaiti legs, whereas in fact it stands on its own legs. I might add that unlike the Kuwait problem, which is an appendage to the problem of controlling the oil resources, the Palestinian Problem is that of a people urgently in need of exercising their legitimate political rights. Just now it is my belief that the Palestinian people stand at this juncture on the threshold of a new era.

One welcome outcome of the Kuwaiti crisis is the emergence of the UN Security Council as a body capable of acting in unison. The position they are taking, with regards to that crisis, is that *the use of force in order to annex another people's territory is unacceptable in international relations*. While they are busy handling this crisis I am sure that they are aware of the lesson to be drawn from it, which is that regional conflicts should not be allowed to ferment over a long time, unattended to and unresolved. As we have just witnessed, a local conflict can develop suddenly into an uncontrollable crisis. This lesson will be borne in the minds of those responsible for maintaining world order and security. Of course it goes against the grain of politicians to deal with a latent crisis before it explodes. But this time the lesson is conclusive.

I find it of symbolic significance that the Kuwaiti

crisis broke out when the Soviet Foreign Minister and the American Secretary of State were convened in Irkutsk, trying to resolve the Afghan problem. In the changed political climate, regional conflicts have become much more threatening, and the agreement between the super powers to work together to defuse them is certainly one of the most important decisions they made. Apparently, Saddam Hussein was not fully aware of the significance of this new approach, and thus provided the ministers gathered in Irkutsk an additional proof of validity of their new concept concerning regional conflicts.

The history of the search for a solution to the Palestinian question is not promising. It has been conducted with the intention of letting it stifle over time. But more recently, the European Community has adopted a position much closer to that embraced by the NGOs. It is expected that by the year 1992, united Europe, together with the Soviet Union, would exert greater influence over the conduct of world affairs and bring the USA to alter its traditional anti-Palestinian position.

This should be easier after the crisis over Kuwait. Whether resolved through negotiations, which is the hope of the whole world, or by military collision, the conclusion will be clear – regional conflicts should not be allowed to simmer underground until the fire breaks into the open. This was also the conclusion that should have been drawn from the Intifada. But the experience of the Kuwaiti crisis is so much more traumatic that the conclusion would certainly be much more compelling.

Now, there is very little the NGOs can do about the Kuwaiti crisis. But they can start an intensive activity within the European Community to urge its political leaders to heed the lessons of the Middle Eastern crises and be resolute in upholding the position taken by the Community time and again. That is the solution of two states living in peace, Israel and Palestine, based on all the relevant resolutions of the UN. They should be persuaded that this is the most equitable solution and best meets the interests of the International Community. They should be urged to insist on convening an international peace conference with a clearly defined agenda, including all the relevant questions to be discussed and resolved: Palestinian self-determination, the right of return, resettlement of refugees and compensation for abandoned property, regional security and economic relations as well as international guarantees.

### NGO conference

Since 1983, conferences of NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations) on the Palestinian Question have been taking place yearly, under U.N. auspices, at either Geneva or Vienna. The first conference got a great deal of attention (*TOI-3, p. 6-7*), to the point that the Israeli government felt obliged to counter it by press conferences of its diplomats. However, with the passing of the years, the NGO conferences started to get into a routine, and many regular

*The following statement was published by the ICIPP as an advertisement in Ha'aretz, 17.8.1990*

#### OCCUPATION IS OCCUPATION.

The conquest and occupation of a territory, against the will of its people, is definitely contrary to the internationally accepted norms, which have recently been reconfirmed by the U.N. Security Council.

The occupation of Kuwait by the Iraqi army deserves to be strongly condemned. But such condemnations become ridiculous when voiced by a government which at the same time maintains the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

During the past two years the Israeli government has rejected all peace initiatives and proposals for negotiations; it refused to make even the smallest step towards a solution. During two years, PLO speakers have, again and again, called upon Israel to start peace negotiations; these proposals were all rejected out of hand, and the occupation continued. Among Palestinians despair and fury grew; it was the Israeli government itself that drove the Palestinians into Saddam Hussein's arms.

The Kuwait crisis should be solved peacefully, without a flare-up which could set the whole Middle East on fire. If attacked, Israel has the right to defend itself – but Israel has no interest in supporting dangerous adventures. In particular, Israel must avoid military intervention in Jordan, under whatever pretext; such an intervention would have immeasurably destructive consequences.

At this very time of difficult and dangerous crisis, we must extend our hand to the Palestinian people; an Israeli peace initiative is more than ever required. Contrary to what Shamir and his ministers would like to believe, the Palestinian problem is not, and will not be, off the regional or global agenda.

The unified opposition of the international community to conquest and occupation is a ray of hope, and is bound to have consequences also for the future of Israel and the territories under its occupation.

#### The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

participants started to feel frustrated at adopting virtually the same resolutions year after year.

With the Middle East on the brink of war, and the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue seriously disrupted, this year's NGO conference regained some of its significance.

The Geneva conference, which took place between August 29 and 31, provided the first opportunity for Israelis, Palestinians and activists from other countries to meet and discuss the new situation.

This was apparently realised by the Israeli authorities, who made considerable efforts to hinder Palestinian participation. Feisal Hussein and Zuhira Kamal were among those who received restraining orders, forbidding them to leave the country. Other Palestinians were stopped at the Airport.

Restraining orders were also issued to Palestinians with Israeli citizenship: the leaders of the Ibna El-Balad movement, as well as to Dr. Ahmed Tibi, known for his role as the liaison between former Labor Minister Ezer Weitzman liaison and the PLO (*TOI-40, p.5*). The Israeli press published in great detail how Tibi was woken up by policemen at 3 A.M. and given the restraining order. Protests were issued by Knesset Members, peace groups and Arab organizations. In short, the NGO conference became a hot news item for days.

Several Palestinians living under Israeli rule did arrive at Geneva – some simply because they left before the Israeli authorities barred the doors. There was also a sizeable PLO delegation. On the Israeli side there was less participation than in previous years, though a variety of political parties and organizations were represented: the Progressive List, the Communist Party, the ICIPP, the Women for Political Prisoners, the Defence of Children Under Occupation group, and Physicians for Human Rights...

Israelis and Palestinians mingled with representatives of a myriad of organizations from all over the world, who involve themselves in Middle East issues. There were many discussions, panels and workshops. There were also unscheduled improvisations, as when fiery Haifa activist Erna Mer organised a "Women in Black" vigil on the sedate Palais de Nations lawn.

Though many subjects were discussed, the whole conference was overshadowed by the Gulf Crisis.

The conference started with a special message from Yaser Arafat, (read by the PLO's Geneva representative), reiterating that *the Palestine Liberation Organization is undertaking the role of mediator in the Gulf conflict and is not party to it, nor does it stand with one party against another.*

The deliberations were concluded with a resolution re-affirming the principle of non-acquisition of territory by force – as applying both to Kuwait and to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 – and condemning the American military build-up.

In the Israeli media, the most attention was given to one event at Geneva – the meeting between Arafat adviser Nabil Sha'ath and two Israelis: Communist KM Gozanski and Dr. Ruhama Marton of AIPPHR\*. Several of the Israeli papers quoted Sha'ath's message to the Israeli people: *The PLO is as committed as ever to peace with Israel. It did not make even the smallest change in its commitment to resolutions 242 and 338 and its acceptance of the two-state solution (Ha'aretz, 29.8.1990, Al Hamishmar 27.9.1990).*

This meeting was a new challenge to the "Anti-Terrorist Act" (which forbids Israelis to meet with PLO officials) – less than a week after the start of proceedings to remove KM Muhammad Miari's parliamentary immunity, for alleged breach of the same (*see sep. article*). The Likud and the extreme right were quick to demand the removal of KM Gozanski's immunity as well. Undaunted, she answered a journalist's question: *My participation in such meetings is what my voters expect of me (Ma'ariv, 29.8.1990).*

\*AIPPHR – Association of Israeli and Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights.

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## No to a Gulf War

*The following petition is being circulated by the Committee to Prevent a Gulf War (CPGW) and was already signed by several hundred Israelis*

The occupation of Kuwait by Iraq has created a new focus of tension in our region, and gave the U.S. a pretext to build up an unprecedented concentration of military forces. The purpose of this concentration is not to uphold Kuwaiti sovereignty, but to serve the American economic and strategic interests in the region.

An American military operation can prove a disaster for the whole area - including Israel. We call upon the government of Israel not to participate in such an operation and to oppose it.

The crisis should be solved by way of negotiations, on the basis of the U.N. resolutions calling for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

We believe that a political solution of the Gulf Crisis, on the basis of the U.N. resolutions, will give a new impetus toward implementation of the U.N. resolutions on the Palestinian question, which call for Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories and for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Contact: CPGW, c/o Roni Wagner, 20 Eilat St., Holon 58306, Israel

## What about fear?

by Beate Keizer

At the call of the Trotskyist Matzpen we demonstrated, at August 9, in front of Defence Minister Arens' Office against Israeli participation in a Gulf War. One of the slogans read: *Arens, you and your family probably have gas masks, already!* The slogan was afterwards taken up, in a slightly revised version, by the homeless, in their own protest.

As the newly created "Committee Against a Gulf War", we stood on September 4 in front of the American embassy, heroically holding signs like: *Negotiations, only way to solve conflicts! - Iraq, withdraw from Kuwait/US, withdraw from the Gulf! - Blood more precious than oil!*

At other places and other times some dozens of others expressed

similar views. That's all good and well. But what do we - as peace activists - answer people in the street who feel that their safety is solely dependent on Israel's having an atom bomb - and preventing Iraq from developing one? (And what to say - as a peace activist to oneself - when in the middle of the night one finds oneself sharing the fears of "the man in the street"?)

What does a peace ideology offer to an Israeli when - as a side-effect of the Bush-Saddam poker game - Israeli homes have become "strategic targets"? Are we empty-handed at the very moment of a generally-felt mortal danger?

Could the international anti-nuclear community perhaps help?

How to explain that, even in this hour, the atom-bomb should not be considered a blessing?

Palestinians in Israel might also be interested. As one of them put it: Probably Saddam does not know that we are also here, and if he knew he would not care (Nasim Shaker of Jaffa, interviewed in *Ha'ir*, August 24).

## Women and the Gulf and dialogue.

*The following information was provided by Bertie van Gelder.*

This year, a Women's Peace Conference will again be held in Jerusalem. The conference is scheduled to take place on December 28 and 29. The preparations are made by virtually all Israeli and Palestinian women peace groups: the groups united in the "Women and Peace" coalition (among them Women in Black, Shani, Women for Political prisoners); the big women's network "Reshet"; the Palestinian women's organizations in the Occupied Territories and independent Palestinian women. Together, these women represent a wider political range than could be found working for Israeli-Palestinian peace among males.

The Gulf Crisis certainly gave these women something to talk about. But there were no Yossi Sarids; nobody had an impulse to break the dialogue. On the contrary: the dialogue became so intense

that for some weeks the conference preparations were delayed.

Are women really better? Probably just more practical.

Information about the conference through: Coalition "Women and Peace", P.O.Box 65190, Tel-Aviv.

■ *Following statement about the Gulf Crisis was published on September 6:*

The "Women and Peace" Coalition stands on its position calling for peace and dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, for ending the Israeli occupation and for establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The Arab Gulf Crisis and the danger of war reinforce the immediate need for negotiations with the PLO, as the only way to reach a peaceful solution and to prevent the horrors of war. We, women, refuse to accept war as a solution to resolve conflicts, complicated as they may be.

Especially in this period of crisis there is a need to persist in the belief in the principles of dialogue and in finding a peaceful solution.

Contact:

Nabila Espagnoli, phone: 04-671269  
or: Chana Safran, phone: 04-664949

## Women in Black

- summer 1990 -

by Debby Lerman

Women in Black vigils began this summer their 30th month of existence with hundreds of women, in more than 32 locations, demonstrating every Friday noon for peace and against the Israeli presence in the Occupied Territories. This action, started at the beginning of the Intifada by a few women, has grown to be the most important and visible demonstration against the occupation taking place in Israel today, earning it national and international respect and admiration.

The demonstration called by Women in Black in early June, under the motto *23 years of occupation - it's enough!*, was widely attended. Waving aside for this occasion the "women only" policy, all the left and peace groups were invited. The response was overwhelming; a two hour vigil joined the forces of thousands of activists from a wide spectrum of groups and political parties.

But the success of the vigils, together with the changing political climate in Israel, has triggered an unwelcome side effect. The strong and increasingly violent actions of

fascist groups (Kach, Moledet, Techiya), are a common occurrence today. Kicking, beating, pushing and cursing, they appear every Friday, having declared publicly that their aim is to "clean Israel from the Women in Black Plague". In one case, insecticide was sprayed in the women's faces.

These tactics caused several of the vigils to take special security measures, including in some cases stepping aside or moving the vigil to a safer spot, as was done in Haifa, Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. The police, when approached for protection, either chose to ignore the request for their intervention, or sided openly against Women in Black.

After months of struggle, dozens of complaints and many women injured, the issue was taken up by the media. Various articles in the press, reporting the events and the disregard for the situation shown by the police, generated some police action during the past month, that will hopefully continue into the winter.

Encouraged by the lack of interest shown by the authorities, the Kach group decided to take the war against Women in black one step forward, and started a campaign of harassment by phone. Several women in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv have, for the past month, been the victims of obscene and threatening phone calls. Complaints were filed, supported by recordings, and by reports that the threats were coming from well-known Kach activists, sitting in the Kach offices in Jerusalem. Still, no effective action has been taken by the police and the situation is getting progressively worse, with Kach telephoning the First-Aid centers and sending ambulances to the women's homes; also, leaflets were distributed with their names, addresses and phone numbers. Various meetings of the women were held to analyze the measures to be taken.

Another item on the agenda of the Women in Black meetings was the political repercussions of the Gulf Crisis. The decision adopted by an overwhelming majority was that there should be no change in the manner or scope of the vigils. Moreover, it was agreed that today,

organized political action for peace and dialogue is more important than ever; that the demonstrations are not dependent on current events, but on the historical necessity of finding a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Contact: *Women in Black*, c/o Dita Bitterman, 209 Dizengoff St, Tel-Aviv

### Postnatal detention

From Women For Political Prisoners (WOFPP) we got the enthusiastic message that a two weeks' publicity campaign for Rabiha Thiab Hamdan had succeeded in securing her release.

Thirty-six year old Hamdan, who has been working in the office of Palestinian leader Feisal Hussein, is a mother of three, and had been under house arrest since May 1, 1990.

At September 16, she was arrested while on her way to the Ramallah police, to whom she had to report daily. Without any charge being brought against her, she was incarcerated in the notorious Russian Compound Detention Center of Jerusalem.

Hamdan's imprisonment was especially dramatic since it interfered with her breast feeding her three months-old baby.

Contact: WOFPP P.O.Box 31811, Tel-Aviv; phone: 294510

### Ongoing struggle

■ The notorious Rabbi Moshe Levinger, imprisoned for killing a resident of Hebron (TOI-42, p.8), benefitted from a special "early release order" signed by Police Minister Roni Milo. Altogether, he had spent a total of no more than three months behind bars. Levinger was actually released on August 14 - in the week following the Jerusalem anti-Arab pogroms.

When Levinger stepped out of the Eyal Prison gate, he was greeted by a group of Mapam demonstrators shouting: *Racist! Murderer! Go back to prison!* The rabbi's followers, who had come to give Levinger a hero's welcome, pounced upon them, and a violent confrontation ensued. Levinger gave an impromptu speech, railing against "the leftist traitors" and promising *next time I shoot, I will aim better.* The speech was constantly punctuated by the peace demonstrators whistling, hooting and shouting *Blood merchant!*

The whole scene was shown on the television news. There was also an interview with Avi Brosh, a handicapped army veteran and peace activist, who said: *Rabbi Levinger's men tore to pieces my placard, on which were the words "Thou shalt not kill". I propose that the honourable rabbi be consistent, and tear these words out of the Bible, too.*

■ At noon on September 30, a caravan of more than a hundred peace activists set out for the Gaza Strip. They intended to reach El-Bureij Refugee Camp, to protest the extensive house demolitions and continuing curfew imposed by the army (see p.2).

At the entrance to the Gaza Strip, their way was blocked by large army forces, commanded by the Gaza Strip Military Governor in person. They unfolded their banners and started a demonstration on the spot; soon, armed settlers arrived and shouted abuse at the demonstrators.

After some negotiations, three Knesset members - the Communists Hashem Mahamid, Tamar Gozanski, and H'sein Fares of Mapam - were allowed to enter the Gaza Strip. They were, however, barred from entering El-Bureij Camp itself - by personal order of Defence Minister Arens. Their presence on the spot probably deterred the army from dispersing some 40 demonstrating Gazan women who came to express solidarity with the El-Bureij residents.

■ In June 1989, Israeli army sappers blew up the house of Jamil Abd-el-Aziz Tarawi at Balata Refugee Camp, because Tarawi's cousin - who had lived with him in the house - was arrested and after interrogation signed a confession regarding his "involvement in terrorist activity". By mistake, the explosion also destroyed the house of Ali El-Masri, Tarawi's neighbor.

El-Masri should have received compensations from the authorities, but these did not arrive; for a year he, his two wives and his six children lived in a tent provided by the Red Cross.

The El-Masri case came to the attention of the Clergy for Peace group. The group's rabbis met

with the Army Chief-of-Staff, with then Defence Minister Rabin and with several military governors. At last, the authorities granted El-Masri the sum of 20,000 shekels (\$10,000); together with the aid granted by UNWRA, El-Masri was able to build a new house. The Rabbis were invited, as guests of honor, to the new house's inauguration on August 2.

In the refugee camps, visits by Israeli civilians are nowadays extremely rare; the rabbis' car was escorted, from the Balata Camp entrance, by a bodyguard of masked local youths, armed with clubs, knives and axes. The rabbis were warmly greeted by El-Masri and his numerous guests at the ceremony. However, when the rabbis were making their way out, a single stone was thrown from an alley and smashed their car's back window. The rabbis' Palestinian escorts offered deep apologies for this mistake, and promised to compensate the car's owner.

Contact: Clergy for Peace, P.O.Box 8343, Jerusalem 91083; tel: (0)2-710892.

■ In April 1990 Ismail Al-Gol, an inhabitant of East Jerusalem, was detained by the police on charge of murder. After a week's interrogation, Al-Gol signed a confession, describing in detail how he had committed the crime; however, a few days later other suspects were apprehended, and Al-Gol was released with no charges preferred..

This induced the B'tselem human rights organization to start investigating the 'Minorities (i.e. Arab Squad)' of the Jerusalem police. Testimonies were taken from Al-Gol and many other Palestinians interrogated by this squad's officers.

From these testimonies, a grave picture of systematic torture emerged. The report was presented to the police by Ratz KM Dedi Zucker. The Police Commissioner was obliged to appoint an internal police investigative team. Five months later, the team concluded its work, recommending the prosecution of nine 'Minorities' interrogators.

It remains to be seen whether the officers—who made public complaints of being 'victimised—will indeed be put on trial.

Contact: B'tselem, 18 Keren Hayesod St., Jerusalem 92149; ph: (0)2-667271/4

■ In recent months, graffiti calling for the expulsion or killing of Arabs appeared at numerous walls and bus stops in the Haifa area.

Despite several requests from Arabs as well as from peace groups, the authorities failed to have the racist slogans removed. An initiative was taken by the Haifa Peace Groups Coordination Committee. At the committee's call, dozens of Jewish and Arab peace activists gathered on August 11, took cleaning tools and spread out through the main roads. At more than a hundred locations, anti-Arab graffiti was erased.

The well-publicised operation went on without a hitch, except at the Megiddo-Yagur highway where officials of the Environment Preservation Authority interfered. They claimed that such actions are not allowed without prior authorization from the Environment Ministry. In Israel Environment – and Nature – have never been a left-wing cause.

Contact: Haifa Peace Groups Coordination, P.O.Box 45583, Haifa; phone: (0)4-660281.

## Muhammad Miari: Immunity threatened again

Since Muhammad Miari was first elected to the Knesset in 1984, no less than five attempts were made by the right to remove his parliamentary immunity. In three instances, the case against him was so weak that the attempt failed in the early procedural stages; once, the Knesset majority did decide to deprive him of immunity, but its decision was overturned by the Supreme Court (TOI-18, p.6; TOI-28/29, p.6).

The fifth attempt began at the end of August 1990, when Attorney-General Charish presented an official request to have Miari's immunity removed, so that he could be put on trial for having participated in a joint press conference with PLO spokesperson Basam Abu-Sharif. That press conference took place at Athens, in February 1988; it was in connection with 'The Ship of Return' – on board of which Palestinians from the Occupied Territories – who had been deported during the previous 20

years – intended to sail demonstratively towards the shores of Israel.

Peace activists and Parliament Members of Israel, as well as of many other countries, intended to accompany them. Thousands of Israelis – among them writers, artists and other public figures – made known their intention to greet the ship on the Haifa waterfront. (The plan was ultimately foiled by the Mossad, whose agents blew up the ship in a Cyprus harbour – TOI-31, p.5.)

Together with Miari, two other participants in the Athens press conference are also charged: the 'recidivist' Latif Dori; and Miriam Elgazi, who had a special affinity to the ship action, having been herself a passenger on the 1947 'Exodus' ship of Jewish refugees. Though Dori and Elgazi are not Knesset Members, their charge sheets are linked with Miari's, and their trial will not begin until the question of Miari's immunity is settled.

As the Knesset House Committee began its proceedings, KM Yossi Sarid remarked: *If immunity should be removed from all Knesset Members who met with the PLO, this will include some 20 or 30 KMs. Why did the Attorney-General single out Miari for special treatment?* In answer, Charish claimed that Miari's sin was far more grave than that of others, since he had 'not only talked with the PLO, but also participated with the PLO in planning the terrorist organization's propaganda act'. To support this contention, the Attorney-General presented to the committee a transcript of Miari's Athens speech, through which it became clear that Miari had spoken of 'our ship'.

Adv. Yossi Bard, Miari's lawyer, called upon the committee to reject Charish's request out of hand, on the grounds that Miari had performed a political act, which is part of his duty to his voters; the immunity for such acts is absolute, and cannot be removed. Most legal experts agree that this is a valid judicial argument. However, Knesset votes are usually decided politically rather than judicially.

The House Committee's delib-

erations seem likely to continue for several more weeks; should it vote against Miari, the matter will come for a further vote at the Knesset plenum. In all these votes, the Likud and extreme right are certain to vote against Miari; the smaller left-wing parties are certain to vote in his favor; the result hangs, as always in such cases, on the Labor Party – whose representatives are so far hesitating and vacillating, often being altogether absent from the proceedings.

On September 10, after the House Committee concluded the first round of its proceedings, KM Miari and Yossi Bard held an impromptu press conference at the Knesset House. Miari told the journalists: 'I regret nothing. If I have to go to prison, I will be in good company – with Abie Nathan, the refusing soldiers, and the prisoners of Ansar-3.'

That night, the office of Adv. Bard in Tel-Aviv was set on fire by unidentified arsonists.

Letters of protest to: *Knesset House Committee, the Knesset, Jerusalem.*  
Letters of solidarity to: *KM Muhammad Miari, 28 Ya'ir Stern St., Ein Hayam, Haifa 35475.*

### Dialogue of teenagers

by Beate Kelzer

From 12 to 22nd of July, 112 youngsters met in an international peace camp at Tjornarp, in Sweden. Under the auspices of the International Falcon Movement, this year's camp was centered on a meeting of Israeli youngsters from Hashomer Hatzair (Mapam's youth movement) with Palestinians – of the Occupied Territories, as well as from inside Israel – together with Egyptian and Swedish teenagers.

There were ten days of discussions, cultural exchange and just being together, eating together, and sharing the lodgings in Swedish village homes.

They also agreed together on a resolution, advocating a solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by creating two states for two peoples in the "common homeland".

We talked with an Israeli participant, Natali Shomroni of Holon. Natali did not really change her

ideas in Sweden; she already was convinced. Some people did change their ideas. There was a Palestinian girl who said that she never knew that such Israelis as were there in Sweden really existed.

Much energy is spent by the participants in continuing the contacts through writing, talking on the telephone or visiting each other. The Israeli Jewish and Arab participants are going to meet in Givat Haviva; a meeting in Taibeh, including also the participants from the Occupied Territories, is being prepared.

The ideas which Natali already had seem to have become more important. At the meeting of the Holon branch of Peace Now she came to report on the camp, and its resolution. Her parents do not yet agree hundred percent with her ideas, but she talks a lot with them.

### Constructive protest in Jaffa

by Toma Shick

The 7th Voluntary Work Camp, organised in early August by Al Rabitah ("League for Jaffa Arabs") and the Jewish-Arab Action Committee was again aimed at improving living conditions of the Al 'Ajami quarter – where the Palestinians of Jaffa live. Al 'Ajami inhabitants – young and old – together with Tel-Avivians and volunteers from abroad expressed for a whole week their "constructive protest" against the municipal neglect of Jaffa.

The truth is that this year the camp had less participants than before, but the enthusiasm of those who did come made up for their small number: streets were cleaned; road-halts were created in a street with many children; a summer-camp for retarded children was maintained; material assistance was offered to Arab and Jewish homeless of Al 'Ajami's shantytown; playgrounds and gardens were laid out, with a wall painted artistically.

Moreover, a monument *In Memory of All Victims of Violence* was erected by Farid Abu-Shakra, with the help of volunteers. This was a last minute addition to the planned projects – an answer to a series of

violent outbreaks throughout the country, to which both Jews and Arabs fell victim.

The monument was unveiled by none other than Tel-Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat. By this act, Lahat made a sharp break with the authorities' traditional hostility towards Al Rabitah and its work camps.

Past work camps had been monitored by a notorious Shabak agent (in a fancy car); the organisers were accused by the municipality of involvement in Arab nationalist conspiracies; and volunteers were fined for "trespassing on public land". The only goodwill gesture in all these years had been the placing of green, frog-looking garbage containers in neglected areas. This year, however, one of the municipality's vans arrived at the camp loaded with working tools, wheelbarrows and paints... and the mayor showed up several times, delivering speeches and making a tour with his staff along the working sites.

Moreover, Mayor Lahat – for the first time in nearly twenty years of tenure – invited Jaffa's Arab leaders to his office and was prepared to discuss their problems without limiting his time. He promised a fair slum rehabilitation process; support for the 30 homeless families living in tents at Ajami; and regular meetings with the leadership.

The reasons for Lahat's sudden volte-face are not clear. He may have been intimidated by the sharp public reactions to his "Judaisation of Jaffa" statement (*TOI-42, p.6*). Also, he may have been pressured by the Los Angeles Jewish Community, which in the past already made its support for the Jaffa Rehabilitation Project conditional upon Arabs, as well as Jews, benefiting from it.

The Al 'Ajami residents, for their part, were dumfounded by the mayor's sudden generosity. In his speech at the work camp's closing ceremony organiser Nassim Shaker summarized: *Lahat's promises sound good; as to whether they will be carried out, let's wait and see.* In the meantime, preparations are made to help the homeless get through the winter.

*Al Rabitah, P.O.B. 41083, Jaffa*



## Peace festival

In the summer, a great number of open-air festivals take place in different parts of Israel: festivals of theatre, cinema, jazz, dancing, with new ones every year. The festivals – mostly devoid of any politically relevant item – seem to provide an escape from unpleasant realities.

A different kind of festival was held at Nazareth in the middle of August. "The First Nazareth Jewish-Arab Peace Festival" – to cite its official name – was the brainchild of Arab actor and playwright Rasan Abbas, who enlisted the help of the well-known Dan Almagor. Over several months the two – with the help of a small, overworked volunteer staff – succeeded in organising an impressive number of events: a "peace exhibition" at the Nazareth YMCA building; street theatre shows, poetry reading and plays in Arabic and Hebrew; and the main shows at the town's soccer stadium, at which many Jewish and Arab singers agreed to perform without payment.

Even so, the organisers had to contend with a chronic lack of funds. Except for the Tel-Aviv Cinemateque, none of the institutions which support other festivals was willing to help. The semi-state "Amanut La'am" (Art for the People) organization made its support explicitly conditional upon the non-participation of Palestinian artists.

The date for the festival, August 17-18, was fixed months in advance. As it turned out, the festival took place at one of the most tense moments of the Gulf Crisis. This caused the festival to lose some of its potential Jewish audience, many of whom felt that "the time is not right for going to an Arab city". Those who did come were not disappointed. Among the crowded spectators, at small halls and under the sky, it was possible to feel a strong spirit of Jewish-Arab affirmation and comradeship in spite of the threatening war.

The participation of Oriental Jewish singers and artists was very conspicuous; some of them came directly from the homeless squatters' rally in Tel-Aviv. The festival also succeeded in making a small

breach in the wall of alienation separating Nazareth from Upper-Nazareth, its Jewish neighbor: at the festival, the Upper Nazareth Singers Troupe appeared in Arab Nazareth for the first time in its ten years of existence, and received loud applause.

At the festival's conclusion, Dan Almagor told the people crowded at the soccer field: *Soon you will hear explosions, but they are only fireworks. May that be the only kind of explosion heard in the Middle East!*

## Visits to Ya'abed

1) On July 21, about forty people – mostly kibbutz members – participated in a solidarity visit to the West Bank town Ya'abed. A week before, Ya'abed had been the target of a nocturnal military raid.

The group, organised by Kav Adom (Red Line), brought with them clothes and medicines. At the village center, the Israelis were received by local activists. Then, they divided into small groups and went to visit the families whose sons had been arrested.

2) During the July raid the whereabouts of 25-year old Basel Hamarsha had not been discovered by the army. The military authorities, considered Hamarsha an agitator and invested much effort in searches for him. For over two years, he lived in hiding, emerging only for special events.

On the afternoon of August 10, the army got wind of Hamarsha's short visit to his parents' home. Five soldiers arrived, entered the Hamarsha family's house and surprised Basel, who was sitting with family members and a friend of the family on the roof of the house. Hamarsha was unarmed, and could not possibly escape, the building being 12 metres high. One soldier shot him in the head, at point blank range, and the five departed in haste.

A few hours later, as thousands of shocked Ya'abed residents gathered for Basel Hamarsha's funeral, Ratz activist Najib Abu-Rakiya arrived and wrote down the witnesses' testimonies.

The publicity given to this affair proved very embarrassing to the

army, whose spokesman at first claimed that Hamarsha "was shot while throwing stones". After a few days, an official representative admitted that the soldier who killed Hamarsha had "acted in contravention of standing orders", and was detained for interrogation by the military police. Since then, no details were given on the soldier's punishment, if any.

## Last honours

*The following story got extensive publicity in the Israeli press:*

Imad Shakur, Arafat's adviser for Israeli affairs, used to be an Israeli citizen until 1967, when he left the country to join the PLO. He is well-known to all Israelis participating in meetings with the PLO – whom he addresses in Hebrew.

During the Lebanon War Imad Shakur, who had the rank of officer in the PLO armed forces, saved the life of Israeli combat pilot Aharon Achiaz. Achiaz' plane got hit by Palestinian guns. Achiaz fell into the hands of Lebanese villagers whose houses were daily bombarded. Shakur took him to the PLO headquarters in Beirut, where he was held for several months in rather comfortable captivity. After his return to Israel, Achiaz went to Sachnin in the Gallilee, where the the Shakur family is still living.

A brother of Imad, Suliman Shakur, had a translations office, which provided translations from the Israeli press to newspapers throughout the Arab world. He sought also to establish a monthly magazine in Hebrew, to bring Palestinian views before the Israeli public, but this was repeatedly prohibited by the Interior Ministry.

On August 20, Suliman Shakur suddenly died - at the age of 41.

His brother Imad asked the Israeli authorities for a special 24-hour safe-conduct to attend the funeral. Of course, this request was denied. However, it did start a public debate in the midst of tensions over the Gulf. Shakur's request got the public support of several Knesset Members, as well as of the (now retired) IDF pilot Aharon Achiaz.

## Workers' hotline

by Adam Keller

Slavery was abolished long before the state of Israel was founded. Yet, in present-day Israel the term "slave-market" is commonly used in everyday speech; it denotes those places where Palestinian workers from the Occupied Territories present themselves, early every morning, in the hope of finding an unskilled or semi-skilled job. Most Israeli towns have such "slave markets" on their outskirts; it was at one of these that the Rishon le-Tzion massacre took place. About 150,000 Palestinians go to work in Israel, at salaries and working conditions which few Jewish workers would accept.

Legally, Palestinians from the Occupied Territories are forbidden to stay at night inside Israel's pre-'67 territory, except for those with a special, hard to obtain, permit. In practice, tens of thousands of Palestinian workers sleep each night in makeshift lodgings at the industrial zones and slums of Israeli cities. Periodically, these workers are subjected to attacks by criminals, racist gangs, or policemen.

The National Insurance Act empowers the National Insurance Institute – which is a state institution – to deduct from the salaries of Palestinians who work in Israel exactly the same amount it deducts from Israeli workers. The Palestinian workers, however, are not entitled to receive from the National Insurance Institute welfare payments, unemployment benefits, or a retirement pension. The government claims that the money taken from Palestinian workers is placed in a fund "for the benefit of the Occupied Territories' population". On the other hand, Palestinians do receive payment from the same National Insurance Institute in case of childbirth, bankruptcy of the employer, and work accidents.

Other Israeli Labor Laws are non-discriminatory. Therefore, Palestinian workers are legally entitled to overtime money and to a paid sick leave, as well as to severance pay after a year's tenure in the workplace; any pay arrears must be paid to them with interest; and – though not eligible for membership in the Israeli trade unions – they are entitled to all pay raises and other benefits won in collective bargaining.

In practice, however, many employers ignore all of these legal requirements; the Palestinian workers are either unaware of their rights or unable to exercise them. Nor can the Palestinian workers rely for support on the Histadrut Trade Union Federation. Though the Histadrut headquarters does have a "Department for Palestinian Workers" tucked away in a corner, the local Histadrut officials – with whom Palestinian workers have to deal – are often openly hostile and seek to replace them by Jews. And the Histadrut never objected to the discriminatory clauses of the National Insurance Act.

In late 1987, a group of peace activists in Tel-Aviv succeeded in establishing contact with several Palestinians employed at the city's wholesale vegetable market. At that time, the police daily raided the huge

market compound, where hundreds of Palestinian workers slept in the sheds and warehouses; under pretence of I.D. checks, the workers were kept standing whole nights, sometimes under pouring rain; there were also cases of workers who had to be hospitalised after being beaten up.

Some of the workers' testimonies were published in the press. The matter was taken up by Or Adom (Red Light), a group maintaining a Police Brutality Hotline. As a result two policemen, implicated in mistreating the workers, were suspended. Though one of them was later reinstated, the nightly raids on the vegetable market remain far less frequent.

Following this affair, Or Adom received numerous complaints from Palestinian workers, concerning both harassment by the police and exploitation by the employers. Or Adom was not equipped to deal with the latter, and a new initiative was set up in early 1990: Kav la-Ovdim (Workers' Hotline).

Members of the group started visiting the "slave markets", writing down the workers' complaints and distributing calling cards. The number of telephone calls to the new hotline increased after an article was published in the East-Jerusalem daily *Al Kuds*.

With the volunteer help of lawyer Meir Morgenstern, the group set out to enforce the workers' legal rights – bringing case after case before the Israeli Labor Courts. So far, some 115 cases were represented, mostly concerning the non-payment of salaries or severance pay. In only two cases was a verdict already given – both in favor of the workers.

In some twenty other cases the employers agreed to settle out of court and accepted most, or all of the workers' demands. One such case concerns nine workers who were fired in 1988 from the Ha'ofim bakery in Kiryat Gat, where they had worked for between two and eleven years. Their boss, Shmu'el Bahat, claimed that the nine were *soldiers of the Intifada* and that they had sabotaged his bakery. However, at the Labor Court Bahat could substantiate none of these allegations, and without waiting for a verdict he reinstated the nine workers and gave them full payment for the period since they were fired. Several other employers gave up immediately after receiving the summons – considering that it was better to pay the workers than to pay a lawyer as well...

Among the cases still pending at the Tel-Aviv Labor Court are those of Ahmed Ziada, fired after seven years' work and told by his employer: *Arabs from Gaza deserve no compensation*; Dan Derwish, fired after a false accusation of theft; seven dishwashers at the Yad Ezra Halls in Pardes Katz, fired without the two weeks' notice required by law and replaced by Rumanian migrant workers.

Still another case is that of twenty-three Palestinians who cleaned the streets of Tel-Aviv, working *sixteen hours a day* for the bare minimum of 40 shekels (\$20) a day, without receiving any overtime pay; moreover, for several months they did not get paid at all. The municipality disclaimed all responsibility, since the cleaners are employed through a labor contractor, Cadori Shishat, and *the municipality does not inter-*

fere in his arrangements with his workers.

Kav la-Oved enlisted the support of Tel-Aviv Councillor Dan Darin, a member of the Municipal Tenders Committee, to suspend the municipality's contract with Shishat. Meanwhile, a foreman threatened to kill one of the workers, Mohammed Jaruba, if he will not cease to demand his salary. A Kav la-Oved representative accompanied Jaruba to the police station and made sure that Jaruba's complaint was taken seriously by the police, and was registered.

In another startling case, the employer is none other than the Histadrut Trade Union Federation, which owns the Co-op chain of supermarkets. Like the Tel-Aviv municipality, Co-op employed - through a contractor - Palestinians who worked 16 hours a day for 40 shekels. After the strikes and curfews which followed the Rishon le-Tzion massacre, they were fired without receiving their salaries even though they were officially registered.

This revelation - and the very existence of Kav la-Oved - proved a great embarrassment to the Histadrut. The Trade Union Federation announced that it would open four legal offices of its own, which would receive the complaints of workers from the territories and take these complaints to court when this was deemed necessary.

This, however, applies only to the Palestinians who register at the Israeli Employment Bureaus - 28,000 in number. They are far outnumbered by the "unregistered" workers, whose employment in Israel is officially illegal, and to whom the Histadrut refuses any kind of help.

It is not yet clear how the Histadrut's legal offices will work out. As a test case, Kav la-Oved has referred to the Histadrut a case of a duly registered worker whose pay was withheld.

Contact:

*Kav la-Oved (Workers Hotline), Ahad Ha'Am 62, Tel-Aviv; phone: (0)3-246239/3900661.*

Checks can be made out to:

*"Kav la-Oved", Bank Leumi, Ahad Ha'Am Branch # 811, Account # 357770/38.*

## Vanunu trial: selective disclosures

On August 30, the Supreme Court decided to publish some parts of its verdict condemning Mordechai Vanunu to eighteen years' imprisonment, for revealing the existence of an Israeli nuclear arsenal. Thus, for the first time, the public could catch a glimpse of his super-secret trial. Still, nothing of what Vanunu said in his own defence was published - though some of his arguments could be deducted from the judges' rebuttals.

A significant section of the verdict rejects any distinction between the giving of secret information to an enemy agent, and the giving of it to a newspaper, ruling: *publication of the secrets in a newspaper gives them simultaneously to all enemy countries and to all their agents, as well as to all the terrorist organizations; therefore, it is twice or thrice as grave.*

Gideon Spiro, spokesperson of the Committee for an Open Trial to Mordechai Vanunu (COTMV) made an appeal for improvement of Vanunu's conditions of imprisonment, demanding an end to his total isolation, and contrasting Vanunu's treatment to the favorable conditions and pardons given to members of the Jewish terrorist underground, which carried out murderous attacks on Arabs.

Contact:

*COTMV, P.O.Box 7323, Jerusalem.*

## Urgent appeal

*The Other Israel received an appeal from Najah Jo'beh of East Jerusalem. Her husband is in administrative detention - and suffers from a kidney disease. He is one of the many thousands of Palestinians in Israeli prisons - drowned in anonymity, with only specially severe cases getting any attention.*

Over the past twelve years, journalist Yusef Jo'beh was, time and again, placed under administrative detention without ever being charged with any crime. When out of prison, he was for several years forbidden to leave the confines of his town. His family's bookshop in Ramallah was closed down for long periods. Currently, he is

serving a ten and half months' "administrative detention" period in Ansar-3.

He appealed to the Supreme Court, stating that the sole reason for his detention is that he wrote articles advocating the creation of a Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel; his appeal was rejected, on the basis of 'secret evidence' - which remains secret to this day.

For several years, Yusef Jo'beh has been living with only one kidney. During his current detention, he started to feel great pains, and the prison doctor diagnosed stones in the remaining one. Breaking up the stones necessitates medical equipment, which is available at the Jerusalem Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital. However, the authorities refuse to release him or to send him to hospital, and his situation deteriorates rapidly. Yusef Jo'beh is the father of four children, aged nine to sixteen.

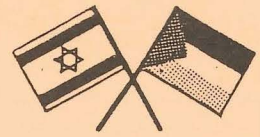
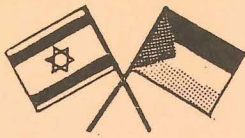
Letters of appeal to: *Defence Minister Moshe Arens, Ha'kirya, Tel-Aviv, Israel; Letters of solidarity to: Najah Jo'beh, c/o Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC), P.O.Box 51284, East Jerusalem, via Israel.*

The Education Ministry recently felt the need to introduce a new subject into the school curriculum, compulsory for all 17- and 18-year old highschool pupils. The subject is named "A human being in uniform". As defined by the Ministry it will have three main themes: *the duty of military service and the damage caused by political refusal; the duty to obey orders, and the ways of distinguishing "manifestly illegal orders", which should not be obeyed; the basic rights of a soldier who faces trial.*

The program is to include case studies, workshops and analysis of the legal background.

(Continuation from page 12)

G'vul the desire for the fall of prison walls, and of the walls blocking Israeli-Palestinian peace. This year, far more activists than usual participated in the "New Year on the Mountain" ceremony of September 21; in face of the Gulf Crisis and the danger of war, many members of different groups felt the need of acting together. *Yesh G'vul, P.O.B. 6953, Jerusalem*



## Yesh G'vul

private conscience – public debate

by Chanoch Livneh

Over the past months, refusing military service in the Occupied Territories has become an issue of growing internal controversy in different Israeli political parties. It began with the conference of the (Labor-affiliated) United Kibbutz Movement, where about 30% of the delegates signed the Yesh G'vul petition. Shortly afterwards, debate was ignited inside the Ratz party. The Ratz representative on the Ramat-Gan Municipal Council, Ofer Gur-Aryeh, was sentenced to 28 days' imprisonment for refusal to serve in the Occupied Territories. On July 26, an advertisement appeared in *Ha'aretz*, signed by 43 Ratz town councillors – headed by Ornan Yekutieli, Deputy mayor of Jerusalem; the councillors expressed solidarity with Gur-Aryeh and declared their intention to welcome him at the prison gates upon his release.

The Forty-Three encountered strong resistance from the party's leadership. Knesset Members Yossi Sarid and Ran Cohen demanded that the Party Secretariat issue a condemnation of military refusal, and thus force the Forty-Three – who in fact include most of the party's middle-rank activists – to retreat from their position. KM Sarid even threatened to split the party over this issue.

However, Ratz 'Grand Old Lady', KM Shulamit Aloni showed herself sympathetic with the Forty-Three. She was quoted in *Ha'aretz* (3.8.'90) as saying: *if 500 officers would refuse, this would change the whole political situation.*

The internal debate in Ratz got very much press attention and helped to place the issue of refusal on the public agenda. The Ratz debate ended (for the time being) with a compromise resolution, which expressed the opposition of Ratz, as an organized political party, to refusal – but also recognised as legitimate the decision of an individual soldier to disobey orders which contradict the dictates of his conscience.

Two weeks later, the Ratz "Young Guard" (which comprises the members aged up to 31 years) convened a meeting of its own, which adopted a resolution praising the refusers as "the defenders of democracy".

Meanwhile, teachers from Mapam-affiliated kibbutzim held a special debate at Kibbutz Giva'at Haviva, with prominent speakers from inside and outside the party. No formal resolutions were adopted in this case, but most of the participants clearly supported the refusers' act of conscience.

On July 30, the public debate was reflected in the editorial of *Ha'aretz*:

*The willingness of soldiers to refuse and be imprisoned must serve as a warning to Israeli society; it is the symptom of a moral crisis, whose depth should not be underestimated.*

Over a long period, the military authorities abandoned the method of repeated call-ups. Now, however, the use of this method – which is extremely harsh upon working people – seems to have been resumed. While there is a limit to how many days a year reservists can be ordered to perform military service, many refusers receive a new call-up order, shortly after being released from military prison – since the prison days "don't count".

One of the victims is the man about whom the Ratz controversy started, Ofer Gur Aryeh; another is Dubi Chiyon – known as one of the editors of the United Kibbutz Movements' magazine. For the press, the most interesting case was 27-year old Danny Endwald of Tel-Aviv. Till recently, Endwald was more known from the sports pages than for any moral or political involvement; as a member of the Israeli National tennis team, he participated in several international matches. However, about a year ago Endwald became religious and decided to drop his athletic activities, in order to devote his life to the study of the Scriptures and the Talmud.

At the same time, he was called for military service as a guard over Palestinian prisoners in the Ansar-3 Detention Camp. This experience was extremely painful, and in July 1990, Endwalder was imprisoned when he refused to repeat it. There were three consecutive periods of detention – of 7, 14, and 28 days respectively. He already received the fourth call-up – though now he got a "period of grace", being ordered to report to Ansar-3 in January 1991. Endwald is determined to refuse this command, too.

The Gulf Crisis is, of course, a source of grave concern to members of Yesh G'vul. At a meeting held in Jerusalem in mid-August, the movement affirmed its opposition to, and condemnation of any occupation – in Kuwait as in Palestine; it reiterated the urgent need to terminate both occupations by way of negotiations.

The participants discussed at length the difficult situation which could arise from any Israeli involvement in a Gulf War: a poison gas attack on Israel would make it "a War of Survival", uniting all Israelis; at the same time, the entry of the Israeli army into Jordanian territory could fuel expansionist dreams on the right. In case of war, there is a special need to be alert to the danger of large-scale deportation of Palestinians being carried out while public attention is diverted elsewhere.

Yesh G'vul has developed a tradition of climbing on the Jewish New Year the mountain – overlooking Military Prison-6, where imprisoned refusers are held. On the mountain top a ceremony is held, including such Jewish New Year customs as eating apples dipped in honey, and blowing the Ram's Horn. The latter act – which caused the walls of Biblical Jericho to fall down – represents for Yesh

*(Continued on page 11)*