

The Other Israel

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for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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Phone: (03) 5565804

Editor: Adam Keller

Assistant editor: Beate Keizer

Editorial Board: Uri Avnery, Matti Peled, Yaakov

Arnon, Haim Bar'am, Yael Lotan, Yossi Amitay

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ESCALATION

On April 11, 1990, Labor Party leader Shimon Peres failed to obtain a parliamentary majority for his proposed government, which would have been a novelty in Israeli history. It would have been Israel's first government to rely for its majority on Arab Knesset Members and parties. Furthermore, it would have been the first Israeli government (since 1965, when the PLO was created), whose program did not explicitly rule out the possibility of talking to these "terrorists".

Exactly two months after Peres' failure, Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir did obtain a (narrow) parliamentary majority for what could be described as the mirror image of Peres' failed government: Shamir's is the first Israeli government to rely for its majority on the support of outspoken racists, who advocate the massive "transfer" of Palestinians.

The period between Peres' definite failure and Shamir's success has seen tensions rise sharply all over the Middle East. A major catalyst in this process was a 20-years old Israeli named Ami Popper. Early in the morning of May 20, Popper left the house of his parents in Rishon le-Tzion, wearing the army outfit of his brother and carrying a gun. Popper set out for the place where, at that hour, Palestinian day labourers congregate. He opened fire, killing seven and wounding many more. His exact motives have not yet been determined. At the time, he was widely described as *deranged*. Not long before, Popper had been dishonorably discharged from the army after having spent some months in its prison. The prison duty of this *deranged* had been .. to guard other - Palestinian - prisoners (*Ha'olam Hazeh* 6.6.1990).

Within hours, news of the massacre spread throughout Israel, reaching the Palestinian workers wherever they were; without anybody organising it, they immediately laid down their tools and set out on their way back home. On the Tel-Aviv/Gaza highway, thousands of crowded Palestinian cars went in convoy, with their headlights on and their passengers waving improvised black flags. As the convoy reached Gaza, the sky over the city was full of smoke from burning tyres and thousands of demonstrators poured into the streets. The military authorities reacted furiously, declaring an immediate curfew; by nightfall, six more Palestinians had been killed in the

efforts to enforce that curfew - bringing the day's total death toll to 13.

Meanwhile, a day's general strike was declared in all Arab towns and villages inside Israel. The Committee of Arab Mayors, which organised the strike, intended it to be peaceful; but as the daily newspapers - carrying on their front pages color photographs of the previous day's carnage in Rishon le-Tzion - arrived in the Arab towns, the Intifada seemed for a moment to have crossed the Green Line: in town after town youths burst out in stone-throwing and violent clashes with the police. The largest confrontation took place in Nazareth, a town which has the double distinction of being the largest Arab town in Israel - and of having a higher unemployment rate than any other Israeli population center. In Nazareth's main street, hundreds of masked demonstrators battled with the police, attacked government offices and set a bank on fire*.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan, held since 1970 under tight control by King Hussein's security services, broke out in massive demonstrations; clashes with the Jordanian army left several Palestinians dead. There were also huge mobilizations at the Refugee Camps in Lebanon, still bearing recent scars of their own. In fact, the entire Palestinian people, in all its far-flung diaspora, strongly manifested its anguish, and fury.

This turmoil came as a complete surprise to Yitzhak Shamir - at the time heading a care-taker cabinet and engaged in forging a definite majority out of numerous rival right-wing and Orthodox factions. Try as they might to dissociate themselves from the "deranged" Popper, Shamir and his ministers could not dissociate from the fact that hundreds of Palestinians were killed, over the past two years, by soldiers of the army - thus making Palestinian life cheap. Nor could the Rishon le-Tzion massacre be disconnected from Rabbi Tzvi Neriya - "spiritual leader" of the National Religious Party, a crucial Shamir ally - who stated publicly only a week before: *Anybody who finds himself threatened by Arabs should shoot in all directions without hesitating.*

In the international arena, the Israeli government

found itself on the defensive. Palestinian leaders, on hunger strike in East Jerusalem, called for a U.N. Observer Force to be stationed in the Occupied Territories, in order to protect their inhabitants. This demand gained extensive international support, and at some point it seemed that the United States, too, would support – or at least not veto – such a Security Council resolution. Paradoxically, Shamir was bailed out, at the last moment, with help from the Palestinian side.

For two years a Palestinian commando unit, belonging to The Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF), has been secretly training in Libya, in preparation for an eventual sea-borne raid on the Israeli shores. In the wake of the Rishon le-Tzion massacre, PLF leader Abu-Abas decided to send his men into action on May 30. Some of them did manage to land south of Tel-Aviv, but all were soon killed or captured by the Israeli army. After a week's interrogation, the PLF force's deputy commander, Muhammad Abu-Shash, appeared on Israeli television. According to this interview, the commandos had been ordered to enter the Hilton hotel in Tel-Aviv, *kill everybody, including women, children and old people* and then proceed to the American Embassy to do the same there**. Shamir used to the full his propaganda advantage; first – to obtain an American veto on the dispatch of U.N. observers, and second – to undermine the U.S. dialogue with the PLO. The PLF is a component of the PLO, and its leader has a seat on the Executive Committee – the PLO's equivalent of a cabinet. Therefore, the Bush administration considered the raid to be a violation of the conditions under which the U.S. entered into dialogue with the PLO.

Due to its very program and composition, many Israelis could not help feeling totally alienated from Shamir's self-styled "National Jewish Government". Abroad, too, the new government received a cool welcome. In the United States – the foreign country most vital to all Israeli governments – the administration, Congress, public opinion and even a significant part of the Jewish community all manifested their displeasure. In response, Shamir and his ministers made considerable efforts to improve their image. The massive wave of repressive measures – which the government's extreme right wing intended for the Occupied Territories – did not (so far) materialise. Defence Minister Arens did promise to

give legal recognition to the settlers' already-existing vigilante squads; on the other hand, Arens also performed some cautious good-will gestures towards the Palestinians such as the gradual re-opening of universities, or the release of several hundred prisoners (out of about 10,000).

The government also invited a senior U.N. official to visit the Occupied Territories, as a symbolic substitute to the vetoed observer force; and even hard-liner Housing Minister Sharon participated in the show of moderation by announcing that Soviet Jews "will not be directed to settle in the Occupied Territories", whatever the value of such a pledge may be. (There is nothing to stop new immigrants – or native Israelis, for that matter – from going, without being "directed", to settlements where housing is cheaper).

Moreover, the government has started flirting with Syrian President Hafez el-Assad, until recently portrayed as Israel's arch-enemy; by some accounts, regular channels for direct and indirect communications between Jerusalem and Damascus are, by now, well established. But it is very doubtful if, in return for peace with Syria, the Shamir government would be willing or able to evacuate the Syrian Golan Heights, occupied since 1967, and formally annexed in 1982.

In the absence of a real peace process, there will be another war. The signs of escalation are already clearly discernable, and the possibility of war is openly discussed by political leaders on both sides (for example, the dramatic statements of Defence Minister Arens, on July 24). The rather crude threats against Israel, made by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, have won him an unexpected amount of support among a Palestinian people grown tired of endless diplomatic initiatives which brought them nothing tangible. Indeed, it is no accident that Abu-Abas is long known to be Saddam Hussein's protégé inside the PLO.

With no perceptible advance towards freedom, resentment and frustration among the Palestinians will continue to build up, until a new catalyst sets them off; King Hussein of Jordan – faced with a worsening economy and rising fundamentalism as well as with a large discontented Palestinian population – might not survive; a Jordanian civil war would draw in the Israeli army from the West, the Iraqi army from the East, and the Syrians from the North;

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Revenge

On June 1 Amir Avramson, an Israeli in a wheelchair, arrived at the bedside of Jamal Abu-Daga, one of the Palestinians severely wounded at Rishon le-Tzion. Avramson became a cripple a year ago, when the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem bus on which he was traveling was forced into a ravine by a Palestinian, and 16 other passengers were killed.

After some initial hesitations, they started to talk and agreed that *revenge is of no avail*. Abu-Daga said: *I worked ten years in Rishon le-Tzion and got along fine with Jews, until that Black Sunday*. Avramson was quoted on the radio as saying: *Long before I boarded that fatal bus, I believed that Israel should talk to the PLO and make peace. What happened only strengthened me in that belief*.

A few weeks later, an official commemoration was organized on the bus attack's anniversary. All survivors but one were invited. Amir Avrahamson did not receive an invitation.

and in the ensuing Middle Eastern War, the use of chemical or nuclear weapons may well be accepted as "a calculated risk".

Such a war is far from inevitable; but its prevention requires strong and prompt action, both from the U.S. administration and from the European community – whose power and ability to act in world affairs was greatly enhanced by the dramatic changes of the past year.

In normal circumstances, the citizens of a sovereign state are bound to resent outside interference with, and pressures on their country's government. The present situation is far from ordinary; under these circumstances, many Israelis are likely to welcome outside interference and regard it as salvation.

The editor

**It should be mentioned that the police had orders not to shoot and kill – as the army did the day before – but to regain control by using their clubs and carrying out massive arrests during the following weeks.*

*** Ha'aretz published some critical notes by television officials about the procedures adopted for this interview.*

The reporter had been briefed by the army which questions to ask, and Abu-Shash apparently had been instructed what to answer. In addition, the military censorship went over the film before it was broadcast. As one of them formulated it: Under these circumstances it would have been better to tell the army to conduct the orchestrated interview themselves.

(Ha'aretz, 7.6.'90).

Protests and dilemmas

In the morning hours of May 20, telephones were constantly busy in the houses of many peace activists. As soon as the horrible news from Rishon le-Tzion came, frantic consultations between the different groups began. It was immediately decided not to adhere to the normal procedures – asking the police for a permit and waiting five days for its answer: within hours, some hundred mostly Tel-Avivian activists went, some with cars and others by bus, to Rishon le-Tzion. They gathered at the desolate place a kilometre south of the city, the "slave market", where Israel's most rightless labor reserve, the Palestinian workers from the Territories, have to stand in the early morning and offer themselves for a day's unskilled work. At about six A.M. this morning, it had become the site of a cynical massacre.

It was not a common demonstration. There were few placards; most participants held mourning candles in their hands, struggling to keep the little flames burning in the strong wind. On the side of the road, some bloodstains were still visible.

The Rishon le-Tzion police – who were not there when the murders took place – appeared and demanded the dispersal of the "illegal gathering"; after short negotiations, the mourners were allowed to stay for another half hour.

The Jerusalem police was less generous; a group of protesters at the Prime Minister's residence was dispersed with tear gas, and two demonstrators detained. The police then proclaimed a total ban on demonstrations in Jerusalem "until tempers cool down". However,

the police actions received unfavorable comments in the media, and it did not disperse about 250 demonstrators who gathered on the following day near Shamir's residence; nor did the Rishon police interfere with the vigil organized by inhabitants of that town at the site, at six in the morning, twenty four hours after.

This whole week was full of nervous action. Every day brought protests of different kinds; demonstrations and vigils took place in towns, in kibbutzim, at the universities, and – several times again – on the site of the massacre itself. University lecturers stopped their lectures or prefaced them with strongly-worded statements; there was a protest meeting of writers, and also a rally of Jewish and Arab trade unionists, surprisingly initiated by the hide-bound, bureaucratic Histadrut Federation. Many Israeli solidarity delegations visited the Palestinian leaders, on hunger strike in East Jerusalem; protesters picketed the halls where the "Jerusalem Festival" continued to present a colourful pageant*, while two kilometres away, in East Jerusalem, Palestinian demonstrators were brutally beaten up.

The leaders of all parliamentary parties, right and left, were quick to condemn the Rishon le-Tzion massacre. In the general Jewish Israeli public, however, after the first shock was over more and more reactions could be heard like: *why make so much fuss about the action of one madman, or: why weren't you demonstrating when Arabs murdered Jews*. Peace demonstrators were at times dismayed by certain by-passers, who actually expressed glee at the killings.

Such sentiments were tapped by the notorious Rabbi Meir Kahane, who sought to hold in Rishon le-Tzion a demonstration in support of the massacre. Incredibly, the Supreme Court ruled this demonstration to be legal, though two years before it banned Kahane from running in the Knesset elections. In the event, Kahane and his handful of supporters were outnumbered by Peace Now counter-demonstrators, who drowned out Kahane's speech, shouting: *Racist, fascist, go to prison!*

The biggest manifestation to follow the massacre took place on the evening of May 26; many thousands marched through the streets of Tel-Aviv, under the Peace Now banners, carrying candles. The march ended in a giant rally at the Municipality Square, with speeches by the writer Amos Oz, an impressive and candid outcry of Bir Zeit lecturer Azmi Bishara (who is an Israeli citizen) and prominent members of Mapam and Ratz. The participants were variously estimated at between thirty and fifty thousand – by no means a poor showing. Yet, many of the participants were left with a feeling of disappointment and frustration. Although it is comforting, after nightmarish days, to be together with many thousands in a peace manifestation, this demonstration was not as big as it could have been, as previous ones on the same spot had been. Was this demonstration an event big and decisive enough to prevent the formation of Shamir's right-wing government or stop the escalation towards war?

Workers' hotline

The Rishon le-Tzion massacre drew attention to the situation of the Palestinian workers in Israel, exposed to exploitation and to numerous humiliations in their daily life. The recently established Kav la-Ovdim (*Workers Hotline*) undertakes their defence. This small group of dedicated Israeli volunteers needs support, financial and other. A comprehensive article on the group's work will be published in our next issue.

Contact: Kav la-Ovdim, 62 Ahad Ha'am St., Tel-Aviv, phone: (03)390661

With Abu-Abas' abortive raid, and the subsequent banner headlines in the Israeli papers *Terrorists Intended Mass Murder*, Shamir regained the political initiative; the peace camp fell to self-searching and heated discussions on ways to break the deadlock.

To many in the peace movement, the only way forward seems to be through radicalization in both word and deed, the breaking of taboos and restraints previously

held inviolate. Such a tendency was clearly reflected in the Knesset speech of KM Shulamit Aloni of Ratz, at the debate on Shamir's new cabinet. She said: *This government calls itself a "Nationalist Government". In any western country of our day and age, a government would be ashamed to style itself thus. This government is committed to "The Greater Israel" ideology. How different is that from "The Greater Germany" which the Third Reich wanted to create in Eastern Europe at the expense of the Slavs?* When challenged to retract that comparison, since it might hurt the feelings of holocaust survivors, KM Aloni replied: *Very well, I retract it. Will it make you feel better if, instead, I compare "Greater Israel" to Benito Mussolini's "Greater Italy"?*

One of the sources of criticism against the Peace Now leadership was its refusal to join the demand for a U.N. observer force in the Occupied Territories. This position of Peace Now disappointed its Palestinian interlocutors, such as Feisal Husseini; also disappointed was the Italian peace movement, when Peace Now rejected its proposal to organise joint Israeli-European delegations of peace activists, which would tour European capitals and lobby for greater European involvement in the Middle East.

The idea of U.N. observers in the Territories did get the public support of several other major peace organizations, such as Yesh G'vul and The Twenty-First Year; another of its supporters is Ornan Yekutieli, Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem of the Ratz Party. Their position was denounced as "treasonable" by Likud KM Uzi Landau, who was especially infuriated that it was expressed during a meeting with the visiting Jean-Claude Aimée, U.N. Secretary General's deputy.

Shortly after the radical groups' meeting with Aimée, Peace Now also took a step which involved some "washing of dirty laundry outside". Peace now activist (and Labor Party member) Ya'el Dayan set out on a U.S. tour, jointly with Palestinian activist Feisal Husseini. (Their combination is of special

significance: in 1948 their fathers, Moshe Dayan and Abd-el-Kadr Husseini, were in command of respectively the Jewish and the Palestinian forces in the Jerusalem area.) Talking at the Jewish Federation Headquarters in Los Angeles, Dayan explicitly called upon U.S. Jews to stop supporting the Israeli government's policies, telling her audience: *You don't support racism. How, then, could you support Shamir's government, when you see who are behind it, and what is its program?* (Ha'aretz, 12.6.1990)

The idea of refusing military service in the Occupied Territories is spreading among people who would not even think of it in the past. *Index*, the local weekly of Ramat Gan, appeared in the week of 12 July with a main article dealing with Ofer Gur-Aryeh, a local councillor for Ratz who was imprisoned on July 3. He was very positively depicted; his act of conscience was dealt with respectfully, not at all as the sensational behavior of "another of those softies".

Another well-publicized refuser was reserve Captain Dani Zamir, who chose to spend a month in prison rather than be in command of a paratrooper company at Nablus. Upon his release from prison, Zamir marched from the Fallen Paratroopers' Memorial at Tel-Nof (south of Tel-Aviv) to Jerusalem, retracing the route which trainee paratroopers must cover; in solidarity, Zamir was joined on his two-day "civil courage march" by a group of 50 supporters; soldiers of Zamir's reserve unit and friends from the peace movement marched side by side.

Zamir's being a kibbutznik, and the kibbutz's traditional devoted loyalty to the army, made this mediagenic act of disobedience even more significant. Kibbutz Ayelet Hashahar – of which Zamir is a member – was subject to a hot debate and a split of its members into two camps, pro or contra Zamir. A similar debate is raging in many other kibbutzim. At the July 20 conference of the (Labor-affiliated) United Kibbutz Movement, a stormy debate broke out; a group of young delegates, including

several refusers, challenged the kibbutz leadership's position which advocates "obedience to the orders of a legally-elected government".

While there is a growing tendency in the peace movement to radicalisation, in reaction to a sharpening situation, there is also a tendency in a different direction. One of the main tasks which the peace movement sees for itself is converting those Israelis who are, as yet, undecided. For some this means making more and more substantial compromises.

A macchiavellian example was given by a number of prominent Labor doves, who chose to back the hawkish Yitzchak Rabin in his challenge of Shimon Peres' leadership. According to these doves, Rabin - exactly because of his image of brutality acquired during the Intifada - may attract Likud voters and win the elections for Labor; by gaining strong positions in Rabin's vicinity, the doves hoped to bring him around, once in power, to a more positive, peace-seeking policy... All of these calculations were, however, upset by Peres' unexpected recovery and his retention of the Labor Party leadership.

Others inside the peace movement advocate a more positive strategy which could result in widening the peace movement's scope: the peace camp should not be interested in only one kind of (in)justice, but should become more involved in social struggles in general. This would make the motives of the struggle for peace more understandable for the poorer Jewish Israelis - who at present are the main power base of the Likud and the religious parties. A case in point is the problem of the homeless, which has reached enormous proportions in recent weeks (*see following article*).

**The directors of the (government-funded) "Jerusalem Festival" - celebrating "United Jerusalem" - have kept nearly all politically relevant events out of their program; they concentrated on "exotic" performers imported from different countries (especially from Eastern Europe, newly friendly to Israel). The only significant exception was the San Francisco Mime Troupe which presented a tragi-comic play on*

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and after the festival held a special performance at the prison where soldiers who refused to serve in the Occupied Territories are held.

Another festival participant, the Greek singer and Parliament Member Maria Farandouri, discovered from Israeli peace activists the true nature of the festival and - before giving her performance - declared to the audience her sympathy with the Palestinian struggle for statehood.

In tents

The influx of Soviet Jews into Israel has aroused great apprehension in the Arab world; all the Israeli government's reassurances could not dispel fears of massive deportations and expulsions of Palestinian inhabitants, to make place for the Jewish newcomers. Nor could the Palestinian fears be dismissed as totally baseless, especially considering that at least one of the parties supporting Shamir's government openly advocates just such massive expulsions. Paradoxically, however, it is young Israeli Jews - some of them fresh from military service in the Occupied Territories - who are turned out of their homes, to make place for the Soviet immigrants. This situation came about through the simple operation of the market mechanism: each Soviet Jewish family gets from the government a monthly grant of \$400*, to pay its rent. Within a few months, the Soviet immigrants snapped up practically all the available free apartments, and caused rents in general to rise steeply. Even small apartments, previously rented for \$150 or \$200 a month, now go for \$400 and more. Young Israeli families, many of whom have incomes totalling no more than \$500 or \$600 a month, have no chance of paying such rents, and a growing number of them are turned out onto the streets.

Overnight, shantytowns and "tent cities" have sprang up in parks, empty lots and public lands in more than fifty sites all over Israel, with new ones springing up nearly every day; overnight "the homeless" have become a social and political problem of paramount significance.

Strictly speaking, such squatting on public lands is illegal; however, the homeless squatters enjoy such strong public support that no mayor dares order them evicted by the police; indeed, most mayors were quick to give the shantytowns official recognition and provide them with water and other municipal services. Nevertheless, with the passage of time bringing no solution, the protest of the homeless is becoming increasingly fierce, with violent demonstrations, clashes with the police, the burning of buses and actions such as the occupation of the Bat-Yam Town Hall, on July 19.

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With his characteristic bluntness, the new Housing Minister, Ariel Sharon, pressured the government right away into giving him emergency powers for the confiscation of lands and erection of "quick housing". These new powers aroused wide opposition: from mayors and Interior Ministry officials, whose planning powers Sharon usurped; from environmentalists; from archeologists; from peace groups, wary of a Sharon plan to drive native Israelis - instead of Russian Jews - into settlements in the Occupied Territories**; from Arab citizens, who feared that Sharon would use his new powers for expropriating Arab lands inside the pre-'67 borders, and carry out such projects as the "Judaisation of Jaffa" (*see sep. article*). On July 17, the Supreme Court stripped Sharon of his emergency powers; it ruled that a recently passed bill, simplifying the procedures for approving construction permits, might be sufficient to solve the Construction Crisis.

So far, the homeless themselves have rejected all offers of housing at settlements in the Territories. In numerous demonstrations, they reiterated demands for cheap housing in *their own town*. Despite the fact that many social groups and political factions are involved in

this movement, a fair amount of intercity coordination has emerged; a clear feature is the homeless' view of housing as a right, and their refusal to become objects of casual charity.

In Jerusalem Mapam people, and the radical "Black Panthers" are involved in setting up and maintaining a shantytown near the Knesset; in Be'er Sheba, the tents for the local "tent city" were donated by Bedouins, through the Association for the Defence of Bedouin Rights. This is quite remarkable, since past Israeli social movements were often extremely suspicious towards everything coming from "leftist peaceniks".

**Since the huge inflation of the early 1980's, rents in Israel are reckoned in U.S. Dollars, rather than in Israeli currency.*

***Such suspicions were voiced, for example, by KM Yossi Sarid (Ha'aretz 8.7.'90)*

Jaffa

At noon on July 18, a group of demonstrators picketed the entrance to the Tel-Aviv City Hall. Strictly speaking, the city whose administration is located in that building is known as Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, two cities united into one in 1948; however, the demonstrators – organised by the League of Jaffa Arabs – disputed Mayor Shlomo Lahat's right to call himself "Mayor of Jaffa", after he announced plans for the "Judaisation" of Jaffa. The Arabs have already become a minority of 30% in Jaffa, whereas in the whole of metropolitan Tel-Aviv, 18,000 Arabs constitute a small enclave among a million Jews. Most of them live in slum conditions which are among the worst in Israel. In 1982, a parliamentary commission recommended the construction of 750 housing units for young Arabs; of these, only 80 were actually built, 28 of which are now "frozen", with the apparent intention of reserving them for Soviet Jews.

Under a storm of protests Mayor Lahat had to backtrack: he had been "quoted out of context"; he would certainly like to see Soviet immigrants come to Jaffa, but "by no means at the Arabs' expense". It remains to be seen what the municipality's true intentions are.

Tensions were already high because of the Jaffa Muslims' struggle with the government, which does not allow them to elect officials to manage their own communal property. Furthermore, 24 homeless young families from the Jaffa slums, two of them Jewish, have set up a tent shantytown. Near it, a solidarity demonstration is due to take place on July 28.

Recent events are also sure to add an extra dimension to the yearly Volunteer Work Camp which will take place in Jaffa from August 3 to 10. The participation of Israelis from the peace movement, as well as of foreigners is expected; all will work for one week, side by side with Jaffa Arabs, in community work (cleaning streets, gardening etc.).

Contact: *The League for the Arabs of Jaffa, 73 Yefet St. POB 41087, Jaffa; ph: (03)812290.*

Women in Black under attack

The first week of June – marking twenty-three years of Israeli Military rule in the Occupied Territories – was the occasion of a series of protest actions undertaken by different peace groups. There were rallies by students and lecturers on the campuses, and the initiative of many Israeli and Palestinian artists – painters, sculptors, photographers, poets and dancers – who presented their respective creations at Kibbutz Giv'at Haviva, in a two-day event entitled "A frontier of Peace".

Some 150 Yesh Gvul activists marked the "Green Line" (pre-'67 border), with long green nylon sheets; the site chosen was the so-called "Trans-Samaria Highway", serving a number of settlements. Out of everybody, the Women in Black achieved the greatest impact.

On Friday, June 8, they invited the members of other groups – men as well as women – to join in their regular visits. Motorists could see the vigils at no less than thirty junctions, all over Israel; for those who missed seeing them in the flesh, the television evening news prominently featured the sights of France Square in Jerusalem, over-

flowing with black-clad demonstrators.

On the following Friday, as the women showed up for their regular vigils, they found themselves faced with a concerted country-wide attack; everywhere, extreme-right demonstrators appeared on the scene, bearing numerous Israeli flags – whose poles, it soon turned out, could also be used as weapons. The right-wing action was organized by three factions who overcame, for the purpose their mutual rivalry. The most serious incident took place at Haifa, where the rightists assaulted women and tore their placards, with the police doing nothing. Indeed, when Khaled Furani – a young Haifa Arab – attempted to help his sister against her assailants, he was severely beaten by the policemen, who detained him for 24 hours "on suspicion of violent and unruly behavior".

A few days later, members of the racist Kach Party broke into the Kol Haneshama Synagogue in Jerusalem, during a (non-public) meeting of the Women in Black. Yelling racist and sexist insults, the intruders began to smash the Synagogue fixtures (belonging to the Jewish Reform movement, the Synagogue is regarded by the ultra-orthodox Kach as a den of iniquity). In this case, too, the police, when it arrived on the scene, did nothing to intervene, and let the women evict the intruders on their own – which they did after half an hour's struggle.

After an intervention by the Association for Civil Rights' lawyers, the police announced its willingness to defend the vigils. However, in return the police demanded that the women change the locations of their vigils and choose "safer" sites. In most towns, the women decided to eschew this dubious protection, and to defend themselves. In this they were quite successful, with many new participants joining in the endangered vigils. The right-wingers still maintain counter-vigils at a distance from the women, but have been dissuaded from new provocations.

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

Dialogue update

Abie Nathan, who—fresh from prison—met again with Yasser Arafat (see TOI-41, p.4) was interrogated by the police on May 18, a day after he came back. For an hour and a half Nathan provided his interrogators with full details of his meeting, asking them to pass to the government the message that Arafat is willing to help in the release of Israeli prisoners held in Lebanon. A video-cassette showing the meeting, which Nathan gave to the television, was in the last minute prevented from being broadcast by order of The Israeli Broadcasting Authority's director. In the meantime, the Attorney-General presented charges against Nathan. If found guilty, the authorities will not be able to avoid having this popular national hero in prison for another period.

Contact: Abie Nathan, c/o The Voice of Peace Radio Station, P.O.B. 4399, Tel-Aviv 61043.

As the Hungary Eight and the Romania Four are still waiting for the conclusion of their respective trials, so far no news (or it should be that Latif Dori was invited by the Cuban Peace Committee—and brought back from Havana the message of his hosts' commitment to Israel's existence and security, as well as to the Palestinians' national aspirations and the need to speedily end the occupation).

In David Ish-Shalom's trial (see TOI-41, p.4) his lawyer, Yosef Bard of Tel-Aviv, invited as expert witnesses General (Res.) Dr. Matti Peled and the orientalist Yossi Amitay (both ICIPP members) to prove that meeting with the PLO no longer constitutes "meeting with a terrorist organization". In their long testimonies they gave detailed information on the process by which the PLO has become a mainly political organization, a sort of government-in-exile. Testifying on his own behalf, Ish-Shalom stated: *I have decided to dedicate my life to the cause of Israeli-Palestinian peace, and as a symbol of this decision, I have changed my family name from "De-Buton" to "Ish-Shalom" (Man of Peace).*

The court was recessed until October. At that time, the police prosecution will present its case. The prosecution is headed by an officer at the rank of "S'gan-Nitzav" (Deputy-Commissioner)—a far higher rank than in normal Magistrate's Court trials. The prosecution witnesses will include Yigal Karmon, the Prime Minister's Adviser on Terrorism. It seems that the authorities chose to make an example of Ish-Shalom, singled out of the many others who participated in the same meetings.

Solidarity letters to:
David Ish-Shalom, Moshav Beit-Zait,
House 22, Israel 90815.

Settler dialogue

Since the beginning of 1990, a group of settlers from Efrat, on the West Bank, established a regular dialogue with Palestinians. So far, seven meetings took place. Among the Palestinian participants were a university lecturer, the head of an Islamic Association, and inhabitants of nearby Refugee Camps. On the settlers' side were a rabbi and an investigator of Nazi war crimes.

One of the Palestinians told *Ha'aretz* (22.6.1990): *It is not enough for us to meet Kibbutzniks or members of Peace Now; we have to talk to those Israelis, who don't accept our people's rights.* A settler participant stated: *We proved to our Palestinian interlocutors that not all settlers are armed fanatics.*

The Palestinians stated that they would have no objection to the settlers' staying on, where they now live, after a Palestinian state is created.

One of the settlers, Sheldon Segall, placed a banner on the roof of his house reading: *For peace, we must negotiate on the future of Efrat!*

He told *Yediot Aharonot* (28.6.1990): *I came to Israel from the U.S. as a supporter of Meir Kahane. I was in favor of throwing out all Arabs. But I was wrong. The Intifada will go on for many more years, and the government can't stop it. There is only one way left - give back the Territories in return for peace. We can't go on like this.*

On May 27 a bomb, apparently planted by Palestinians, exploded in the Jerusalem marketplace, causing the death of a 73-year old Israeli. Three days later the infa-

mous Abu-Abbas raid took place. As can be expected, such attacks cause doubts and misgivings among some in the peace movement. Thus, on June 11, columnist Yaron London—while in favor of dialogue with the PLO—expressed in *Yediot Aharonot*, his doubts as to whether this dialogue could go on "with the continuous shedding of Jewish blood".

Despite such feelings, however, the dialogue goes on. In the first half of June, Ratz KM Mordechai Wirshuvsky appeared in several joint press conferences with Arafat advisor, Basam Abu-Sharif, in Canada. In the beginning of July, a more extensive dialogue took place at Uppsala University in Sweden. Among the Israeli participants were former Foreign Ministry Director-General Avraham Tamir (Labor Party) and Ratz KM Dedi Zucker. The PLO was represented by Nabil Shaath of the Palestine National Council and PLO representative in Holland, Afif Safieh; there were also prominent Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. Sweden's Foreign Minister Stan Anderson participated, as did well-known Swedish academics; the latter's presence gave the gathering the status of "an academic conference", in whose framework Israelis are not prohibited from being present in the same hall with PLO representatives.

The discussions turned towards the Abu-Abbas affair and its consequences; the Palestinian participants stated that the PLO is willing to punish Abu-Abbas—but only if, in return, the U.S. will upgrade the level of its dialogue with the PLO; the PLO representatives did not hide their disappointment with the former low-level dialogue, which "in a year and half did not bring the Palestinians a single step forward".

On his return to Israel, KM Zucker was asked in a radio interview: *When even the Americans suspend their dialogue with the PLO, should not you, an Israeli, do the same?*

Zucker replied: *On the contrary! Especially in times of rising tensions and war threats, peace-seekers on both sides must intensify their efforts.*

Former "Likud dove" Moshe Amirav, now in the liberal Shinuy Party, represents his new party in the Municipal Council of Jerusalem, with the special duty of coordinating municipal activities in East Jerusalem. Amirav took the step of asking the PLO's approval for the municipality's plans to rehabilitate the Shuafat Refugee Camp. As Amirav stated in an official municipality document, *no plan concerning the refugees has a chance of success without the PLO's agreement.*

(Ha'aretz, 11.7.1990).

A few weeks earlier, *Ha'aretz* (23.5.1990) published Amirav's comprehensive plan for dividing the sovereignty in Jerusalem between Israelis and Palestinians, while keeping the city administratively united. Amirav wrote that this plan was already presented to senior PLO members and won their approval.

Rabbis

On May 14, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, leader of the Israeli settlers in Hebron, set out on his way to Eyal prison, accompanied with great fanfare by hundreds of armed settlers. During his twenty-year long leadership of the most fanatic wing among the settlers Levinger was never before sentenced to imprisonment, although he had been convicted seven times of such offences as trespassing, assault and causing damage to property.

On the eighth occasion, the rabbi stood trial for killing somebody. In September 1988 (the Intifada's ninth month) Levinger drove with his family through the center of Hebron and encountered a group of Palestinian stone throwers. Since the soldiers of the nearby army checkpoint did not respond to his exhortations, Levinger went back with his pistol and advanced up the street, shooting wildly in all directions. Kaid Salah, a 42-year old merchant who was standing with a customer inside his shop, was hit by several bullets and died on the spot.

Levinger's trial continued for a year and half. In the end he was convicted, not of murder, nor of

manslaughter, but of "criminal negligence" – and sentenced to five months. A hundred rabbis gathered a few days later, and declared Levinger to be "a hero in the pioneering mould". It was on that occasion that the influential Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neria advocated shooting in all directions, when confronted by Palestinians (*see editorial*).

Most Israelis, however, considered the court's verdict to be an encouragement rather than a punishment. On television Levinger was shown going to prison on the shoulders of his cheering supporters – less than a week before the Rishon le-Tzion tragedy.

On that same 14th day of May, a less conspicuous group set out in the opposite direction. Four rabbis and two Palestinian Christian priests joined a delegation organized by **Clergy for Peace**, which went to Hebron in order to visit the Moslim family of Levinger's victim. The following account was obtained from Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom, one of the participants.

Clergy for Peace contacted Dr. Ahmed Hamzi Natshe, a prominent Hebronite, and asked him to inquire whether the Salah family would meet with a group of Israeli clergy which wanted to convey its condolences, as well as demonstrate revulsion with Levinger's actions and inciteful comments. When an affirmative response was received, a delegation was formed, consisting of Revs. Canon Shehadeh of Kufr Yassif in the Gallilee and Suhail Dewani of Haifa, and of Rabbis Eddie Feld, David Forman, Jeremy Milgrom and Victor Reinstein, all from Jerusalem.

Firstly, the delegation was taken by Dr. Natshe to the shop where Kaid Salah was at work until the moment he was killed by Levinger's indiscriminate shooting. Two of his brothers described the events of that day, and emphasized how Levinger was not in any physical danger whatsoever when he went on his shooting rampage, and that Israeli soldiers were standing passively a few meters from the store throughout the episode.

The entourage proceeded to the

family residence, where it was received by Kaid Salah's young children and many of his relatives.

On the rabbis' side, the leniency which Levinger had received from the courts was condemned strongly; it was emphasized that people dedicated to upholding the sanctity of human life can do nothing but actively show their solidarity with the victims. The visitors mentioned that large segments of the Israeli people – and Jews abroad as well – felt that Levinger's provocative action and the sectarian support given him, especially within rabbinic circles, were a disgrace to God and contrary to universal religious teachings.

Rev. Canon Shehadeh expressed the solidarity of the Palestinians within the Green Line (Israeli Arabs). Their dual identity, being Palestinians as well as Israelis, demonstrates the role this community can play in bridging between the two peoples and building the understanding and trust necessary for peace.

An overwhelming graciousness and warmth was shown by the bereaved family. A rabbi summed up the visit, saying: *We came to console, and we were comforted.*

Contact: *Clergy for Peace*, P.O.Box 8343, Jerusalem 91083; tel: (02)710892. or: *Friends of Clergy for Peace*, 1042 Sierra Street, Berkeley, CA 94707, U.S.A.; tel: (415)524-3144.

Kibbutz tribute to Intifada

There is a new landmark on the road to Gaza. On 20 June a metal sculpture was unveiled in the fields of Kibbutz Nahal-Oz overlooking the Gaza-Be'ersheba highway, just a kilometer before the checkpoint that marks the boundary of the Gaza Strip. The four-metre high monument bears the word "Intifada" in Arabic, surmounted by a white dove, together with an inscription in Hebrew which reads: "A dove of peace and hope awaits the day when infamy will end".

The monument was made by Nahal-Oz member Geyzy Shavit, as an act of protest against the Israeli government's refusal to

take even the smallest step towards a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It would be impossible to ignore my monument, says Shavit. Anyone travelling to or from Gaza will have to notice it.

This Hill has played an important role in my life. Before 1967 we were a border settlement, and there were incidents. I often stood sentry duty here, as a guard against Palestinian infiltrators from across the Gaza strip border. Then, when war broke out in 1967, I went down the slopes under fire and helped dismantle the border landmines, to open the way for the army columns moving towards Gaza.

There were people in the kibbutz who criticized me and said the monument was too radical. We are affiliated to the Labor Party, you know. But everybody was furious at the settlers when they started to make trouble.

The monument in fact replaces a previous one, built by Shavit several weeks earlier but stolen by right-wing extremists a few days after its installation. This earlier sculpture depicted two hands, one holding a stone and another raising two fingers in the "V-for-victory" gesture used by Palestinian youths. According to Shavit, these themes were deliberately chosen in order to shock an Israeli public which has grown complacent to the horrors carried out in its name in the Occupied Territories.

Immediately after the theft of the first monument, Shavit started work on its replacement. He also lodged a police complaint against the settler thieves who had made no effort to conceal their traces. One of them, Avi Farchan, had even boasted to the press about his involvement in "getting rid of the kibbutzniks' traitorous monument".

I am not able to mount a 24-hour guard over the new monument, but this time it will be very difficult for Farchan and his cohorts to harm it," says Shavit. "The monument weighs several tonnes, and it is firmly anchored in concrete. But even in case the settlers do manage to uproot this monument, I will not give up; I have enough scrap metal to make ten successive monuments, if necessary.

P.S. Shortly afterwards, the settlers did make another nightly visit. From the signs left on the scene it seems that they worked hard – but the monument is still there.

Contact: Gezy Shavit, Kibbutz Nahal-Oz, Doar Na Negev 85145; phone (0)51-805328/805220.

Ups and downs of censorship

A parliamentary sub-committee, chaired by Yossi Sarid of the Ratz Party and including two Labor and two Likud KMs, has examined the practices of the Military Censorship, and *unanimously* recommended measures considerably reducing its scope, regarding both Hebrew and Arabic newspapers. The committee recommends a reduction of the number of items which are subject to censorship from 60 to 15. Also, the committee recommends that all newspapers would be allowed to quote freely any information already published elsewhere; adoption of this proposal could mean the end of the censorship's practice to forbid the Arab newspapers in East Jerusalem to publish Intifada-related articles from the Hebrew or English-language press. Defence Minister Arens is reportedly in favor of implementing the committee's recommendations.

Shafik Habib, 49-year old, an inhabitant of the Gallilee town Deir-Hana and chief accountant of a Nazareth bus company, has written poetry for more than twenty years. His poems are regularly published by Israel's Arab newspapers, and he had them collected in volumes as well. Shafik Habib started as a lyrical poet; gradually his poetry became more political – a tendency among Arab poets in Israel, which became manifest after censorship on Arab books was lifted in the early 1970s. In the past two years, the Intifada is a main theme in his poems. A copy of his recently published collection "Back to the Future" was confiscated from a Ramallah merchant, at a roadblock. The booklet was sent to the department dealing

with "seditious literature". A poem considered to be especially seditious was entitled "An apology to the stone". In it the poet asks the stones of the land to forgive him for having always treated them with contempt.

On June 13, police arrived at Shafik Habib's house, confiscating all of his poetry books, and taking him off to the Kishon jail. There, his reading glasses and medicines against diabetes were taken away. He was provided with pen and paper, not by the police but by a (Jewish) cell-mate, and wrote a new poem.

Born free ...

On June 3, 19-year old Intisar El-Qak gave birth to her first child, while a prisoner. After her labor pains began she was taken to hospital with her legs and hands manacled. Her legs were freed, but her hands remained bound throughout the birth and the following days. After her return to prison, El-Qak was forbidden to show the baby – a girl – to her parents, on the visit hour.

The *Women's Organization For Political Prisoners* (WOFPP) started a campaign and is gathering signatures on a petition on behalf of Intisar El-Qak. The authorities seem more and more annoyed with the activities of WOFPP. Since April 5 Yosepha Pick, a lawyer who works for WOFPP, is deprived of her right to see her clients without the presence of guards. She called upon the Israeli Bar Association and is preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Protest letters regarding Intisar El-Qak to: *Warden, Hasharon Prison, Israeli Prisons Authority, Israel;* copies to: *WOFPP, P.O.B. 31811, Tel-Aviv, Israel* (WOFPP publishes a monthly newsletter, available on request.)

After a week's detention, the Acre Magistrate's Court released Habib on bail, but imposed house arrest on him "so that he could not recite his poems in public". He was warned not to publish anything without submitting it to the Military Censor.

In the following week, Habib's modest house became a focus of

pilgrimage for writers, political activists, Knesset Members and journalists; several demonstrations took place in front of the house, and Habib's fellow Arab poets – organized in two rival associations – united in expressing support for him. The Hebrew Writers Association, as such, remained conspicuously silent, but many of its prominent members did participate in the growing protest activities. The Habib case received extensive coverage in the Hebrew press, and many of his poems appeared in translation.

Dr. Matti Peled of the **ICIPP** – who is by profession an expert on Arab poetry – exposed the falsifications in the police translation of Habib's poetry, which was presented to the court. For example, the phrase "The Martyr mocks the army, he mocks the guns and explosives" was translated by the police as "the Martyr mocks the army by means of guns and explosives" and presented as a proof that Habib is "inciting to an armed insurrection".

On July 2, the Haifa District Court released Shafik Habib from his house arrest. Thus he was able, a few days later, to appear in Tel-Aviv – where he got a hero's welcome at a public meeting attended by many of Israel's foremost Jewish and Arab poets, writers and literary critics.

However, victory is not yet assured. Habib is still required to submit all his works to the censor, and he faces a trial on the charge of "incitement to violence" and "identification with a hostile organization". Moreover, during the past few months, Shafik's printer – as well as several other Arab printers in Israel – received orders from the military censorship to submit to it all books they intend to publish. Shamir's government apparently tries, step by step, to re-apply a long-forgotten "Emergency Regulation" – as if to compensate for the token goodwill gestures it made elsewhere.

Letters (calling for an end to judicial proceedings against Shafik Habib) to:

Attorney-General Yosef Harish, Ministry of Justice, Salah-A-Din St., East Jerusalem;

Copies to: The Committee of Israeli and Palestinian Artists Against the Occupation, P.O.B. 6370, Haifa
Contacts: The Association of Arab Writers in Israel, P.O.B. 44913, Haifa 31448;
The Association of Palestinian Writers in Israel, P.O.B. 2396, Nazareth

Michel Warshawski

On November 7, 1989, the Jerusalem District Court found peace activist Michel Warshawski, then the director of the **Alternative Information Center (AIC)** guilty of "giving services by negligence to a terrorist organization" (see *TOI-39, p.5-6*). The main evidence was an Arabic manuscript captured in a police raid on the AIC office. The AIC, which supplements its income by accepting printing orders, was going to typeset this brochure, which contained testimonies of Palestinians who had undergone interrogation – and torture – by the Shabak. Its author, a West Banker, was a member of an organization declared by the government to be "terrorist". Warshawski did not know that, when he undertook to typeset the brochure; nevertheless, the court ruled that his "negligence" should be punished with 20 months' imprisonment. His lawyers appealed to the Supreme Court. It took the Judges until June 28 to decide that Warshawski "did it", but that 8 months were enough of a punishment.

Three days later, dozens of political friends (among them Matti Peled and Adam Keller of the **ICIPP**) gathered in front of the Ramleh prison. They came not only to bid farewell to Warshawski, but also to protest the Supreme Court's verdict. This verdict – despite the reduction of Warshawski's term – still implies that all Israeli typists, typesetters, and printers have to act as censors and police informers, thoroughly investigating all materials presented to them and notifying the police if they suspect anything to be illegal. The negative implications for freedom of the press are self-evident.

Letters of solidarity to:
Michel Warshawski, P.O.B. 13, Camp Ma'asiyahu, Ramleh Prison Complex.
Contact: AIC, P.O.B. 24278, Jerusalem.

Vanunu: no reduction

After months of deliberations the Supreme Court decided, on May 28, to reject the appeal of Mordechai Vanunu. As things stand now Vanunu is going to spend 18 years in complete isolation. He stands guilty of *treason*. He revealed the existence of nuclear bombs in the Dimona pile (his former workplace). As before, all proceedings took place in camera.

Thus far, Vanunu failed to receive the support he should have gotten from the peace movement. In fact, many leading peace activists silently agree with the "Nuclear Dove", Prof. Shai Feldman of Tel-Aviv University, according to whom Israel can afford to give up the Occupied Territories (and make its borders more vulnerable) exactly because it has The Bomb. In practice, this cynicism amounts to tacit compliance with the nuclear policies of governments who have no intention of withdrawing to the pre-'67 borders, and who are engaged in an ever-accelerating Middle East arms race.

An Israeli anti-nuclear movement is vitally needed. The cadre for such a movement may be found in the – as yet small and weak – **Committee for an Open Trial to Mordechai Vanunu (COTMV)**. A big COTMV advertisement, published in *Ha'aretz* on June 1, demanded Mordechai Vanunu's release and added a list of well thought-out demands. Among these the call for *the destruction of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in the Middle East* is shown by nearly every news broadcast to be of vital importance for all the people living in the region.

Contact:
COTMV P.O.B. 7323, Jerusalem.

Druze objectors

For members of the Druze community, unlike other Arab citizens, military service is compulsory in Israel. In recent years, this policy is encountering growing resistance of the young Druze, hundreds of whom fill the Israeli military prisons. The Druze are likely to receive

exceptionally harsh prison terms for refusal to serve in the Occupied Territories, for wholesale refusal to serve in the IDF, or for desertion. In the Jewish public – including the peace movement – there is little awareness of all this.

The case of 17-year old Adi Nafa'a did receive considerable press attention. After he was detained, because of his refusal to appear for the army's medical examinations, the police found out about his being the son of (Communist) KM Muhammad Nafa'a. The following day he was released!

Subsequently, newspapers published interviews with KM Nafa'a – who, in his youth, was also a refuser – and with members of the Druze Initiative Committee, which defends the imprisoned soldiers and calls for an end to Druze conscription.

At present, contacts are underway to establish closer cooperation between the Druze Initiative Committee and Yesh Gvul.

Contact:

Druze Initiative Committee, c/o Jamal Muadi, Yarka village 24967

Pandora's box

On the evening of May 15, a hundred people gathered at a Tel-Aviv hall, where the B'tselem human rights organization released its latest report, dealing with the army's controversial "regulations on the opening of fire by soldiers". (In nearly all cases when Palestinians were shot to death, the military investigators concluded that "the soldiers had acted according to regulations".)

For two hours, B'tselem researcher Ronni Talmor and the organization's lawyers pointed out the contradictions and ambiguities in these regulations. For example, soldiers are only allowed to shoot at an escaping man if they have reasonable grounds to suspect him of having committed "a serious crime"; but "serious crime" is defined in such a way as to allow the shooting of any Palestinian who covers his face.

Adv. Avigdor Feldman summed up: *Every loophole in these regula-*

tions provides an opening through which human beings can be shot and killed. What is going on in the Occupied Territories, day after day, is nothing less than legalised murder.

Contact:

B'Tselem, 18 Keren Hayesod St., Jerusalem 92149; ph: (02)667271/4

In only a few cases were soldiers prosecuted for their misconduct in the Occupied Territories. Usually, this happens when photographs showing clearly the soldier's face can be produced, or when a particular case gets special attention from Knesset Members and/or prominent foreigners.

The government seeks to portray these cases as "excesses", an exception to the army's otherwise impeccable behaviour. However, such court-martials are liable to turn into Pandora boxes, with the prosecuted soldiers and officers implicating higher echelons.

The most sensational trial to date is that of Colonel Yehuda Me'ir, a Governor of the Nablus District in early 1988. At that time, he organized nightly raids on the villages of Beita and Hawara; dozens of "subversives" were taken out of their beds, and had their arms and legs systematically broken by club-wielding soldiers.

This gruesome affair was first exposed by KM Yossi Sarid. The Army's High Command hoped to close the case by having Col. Me'ir reprimanded, discharged and given a position in the Shabak (where his particular talents might prove useful?). However, the Supreme Court accepted an appeal lodged by *The Association for Civil Rights* on behalf of the Hawara residents, and ordered the army to court-martial Col. Me'ir. As his superiors had feared, Me'ir – once in the dock – claimed that he had acted under orders, that similar actions had been taken by many officers in other places, and that it was all part of (then) Defence Minister Rabin's "break their bones!" policy.

Simultaneously, testimonies implicating Rabin personally were heard in another court-martial, where soldiers stood trial for beating an inhabitant of Gaza to death. Ironically, at the time when these revelations came to light, Rabin

was claiming the Labor Party leadership, relying on his alleged popularity with the Israeli public.

At the beginning of July, *The Twenty-First Year* started an advertisement campaign, calling for the prosecution of Rabin. This demand was taken up by KMs Yossi Sarid and Dedi Zucker of Ratz. It also got the support of Likud KM Michael Eytan, who asked: *When soldiers who acted under Rabin's orders are prosecuted, should Rabin himself go scot-free?*

In the following Knesset debate a majority of Labor and Likud KMs voted down all proposals to investigate Rabin's conduct as a Minister of Defence, fearing a major shake-up of the entire military and political establishment.

Meanwhile, Pandora's box is not yet hermetically closed. The court-martials go on, with further unpleasant revelations being a distinct possibility.

Just married

Women for Coexistence (WFO) opened a campaign on behalf of 25-year old In'am Zakut of Shati Refugee Camp in Gaza.

Zakut's husband was deported to Lebanon in August 1988 – one month after their marriage.

Since then, the military government turned down all Zakut's requests for a permit to leave the country in order to visit him.

Letters of protest to:

Minister of Defence Moshe Arens, Hakiryia, Tel-Aviv;

Copies to: WFO, c/o Thea Zigelman, 18 Zecharia St., Tel-Aviv 62592.

■ Adam Keller's widely published report on the conditions in Athlit Military Prison forced the army to take some steps: the warden was reprimanded, the officer in charge of the isolation ward was sacked, and several guards are to be prosecuted. The army also promised to install toilets in the cells.

However, *The Association for Civil Rights* was not allowed to inspect the prison conditions independently, and testimonies of recently-released prisoners (*Ha'ir*, 20.7) indicate that the abuses still go on.



U.S. punishes the dialogue

by Israel Loeff

The American-PLO dialogue which opened at Tunis in December 1988, while positive in itself, never took off to real heights. It was maintained at the lowest diplomatic level. The U.S. government continued to oppose any higher level meetings; in contradiction to its obligations towards the U.N., it even refused to allow Arafat to attend the U.N. General Assembly at New York, forcing the representatives of more than 150 nations to a Geneva roundabout. On the most significant issue – the composition of the Palestinian delegation to prospective talks with Israel in Cairo – the U.S. negotiated with the PLO only indirectly, through Egypt's mediation. This situation could not go on for ever. The United States had in fact only one choice: either to raise the level of American-PLO dialogue, or to suspend it. The aborted landing of Abu-Abas' commandos on the shores of Israel gave it a perfect pretext to do the last.

In contrast with the European approach, the Americans – in their policies towards the Palestinians – have always put the emphasis on the issue of terrorism. There can be no doubt that indiscriminate terrorism against civilians is to be condemned from a moral point of view and that it is counterproductive as well. This applies to all kinds of terrorism, regardless of whether they originate from liberation movements or from governments fighting them. However, there has always been some form of terrorism in the struggles of movements that are weak and unable to conduct conventional battles against a regular army. One still remembers that in Algeria, approximately one million people had to die before it was understood that only a political settlement and the fulfillment of national aspirations could put an end to the spiral of violence.

In fact, even if some acts of violence do continue, this should but strengthen the efforts to achieve a political settlement. Until the achievement of such a settlement, the gradual implementation of political rights (the right to political association, the right to demonstrate, etc.) could, to some extent, already lower violence and thus cool down the Intifada.

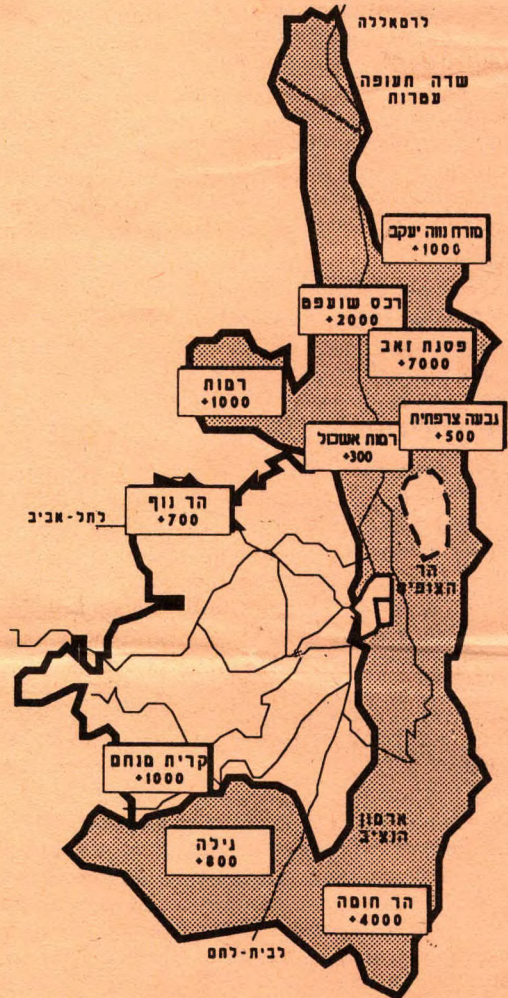
Instead of furthering such concrete steps, the U.S. policy-makers let themselves become involved in a muddled and contradictory diplomacy. The administration placed nearly the whole responsibility for the failure of the projected Cairo negotiations on the Shamir government; but it is the PLO with whom the Americans cut off their dialogue, while Shamir's ministers continue to receive ceremonial welcomes in Washington.

The suspension of this dialogue can not be considered anything but a reward for Shamir's extremism. Moreover, the administration's decision is a blow to the more moderate trends in the Arab world, notably

to Yasser Arafat and to President Mubarak, who did his utmost to bring about the Cairo talks and to prevent the suspension of the American-PLO talks. The decision is also bound to strengthen the extremist trends among the Palestinian people, especially the Islamic fundamentalists who – in their dream of a Pan-Islamic state – oppose not only the existence of Israel but even the creation of a secular Palestinian state.

To sum up: the suspension of the dialogue will increase the very terrorism it purports to combat; more than that, it may well bring closer a new Israeli-Arab war.

Judaisation of East Jerusalem



The map (Ha'aretz, 11.7.90) shows the number of housing units planned in various parts of Jerusalem, for homeless Israelis and Soviet immigrants: nearly all are projected for the Arab part of Jerusalem, annexed in 1967 (grey in the map). Sharon's promise to refrain from directing new immigrants to the Occupied Territories, clearly did not apply to East Jerusalem.

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