



PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

A Step Forward?

By IDRIS MAWASSI

By LENNIE FRITSCH

The recent session of the Palestinian National Council in Amman will likely be remembered as among the most historic of such gatherings, despite efforts to portray it as an individualistic power play by the leaders of "El Fatah," principally Yassar Arafat.

More than ever before, this session stressed an "independent Palestinian resolve"--symbolized by the leader of "El Fatah." Arafat's decisiveness stood in sharp contrast to the submissiveness of his peers--the leaders of the other PLO factions--who dared not show up in the Jordanian capital because of their total dependence on external governments.

Despite the boycott by the leaders of the Popular Front and the Democratic Front, it was evident at the Council in Amman that democratic concepts guide and unite the moderate leadership of the Palestinian movement. This internal democracy was a definitive response to those same leaders who rejected democratic concepts when they waged war on their brethren in Tripoli and in the refugee camps of northern Lebanon, and when they murdered PLO MODERATE Fahd Kawasme last month.

As always, there were those who viewed with consternation and disappointment the fact that Arafat left untouched his "Pandora's Box" of sins by the Assad regime in Syria, which unrightfully and illogically attempted to control the Palestinian leadership. The PLO chairman shrewdly decided to leave four seats vacant on his executive committee for the Syrian-backed factions which did not attend the Council. This demonstration of good will by Arafat and his people towards the more radical front is an attitude which can only serve the Palestinian cause.

The Jordanian aspect of the Council also captured the imagination of many Palestinians--both the special emphasis on "the historic bond and the common fate" of Jordan and the Palestinian Arab nation and King Hussein's peace proposals based on the new formula -- "territories in ex-

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Observers of the Palestinian National Council, held in Amman in December, can be divided into those who see the "cup half empty" as opposed to those who see it "half full."

The fact that King Hussein was the "sponsor" of the gathering lent it credibility. His declaration--"territories in exchange for peace"--can certainly be added to the plus side by doves everywhere.

This view is amplified by some important changes on the political map of the Middle East:

-- The split between the PLO and Damascus, resulting in a pitched battle between Abu-Musa's extremist wing and "El Fatah."

-- The renewal of diplomatic relations between Jordan and Egypt.

-- The move by Iraq toward closer ties with the United States.

-- Indications that the adamant Iraqi veto on peace talks with Israel has been lifted.

-- The emergence of the PLO's moderate wing as the main force in the Palestinian movement, at the expense of the right-wing and left-wing extremists.

Hussein's speech signals the rise of a new front of moderate Arab States -- Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq -- which seem intent upon escalating the search for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. This new reality will further limit Arafat's scope of independence -- he is now subservient to Saudi Arabian petro dollars, to Egyptian political support and to Jordanian hospitality. To his credit is the fact that he evaded the Syrian bearhug.

In lieu of these facts, it is certainly unfortunate that Israeli authorities were unrelenting in their rejection of our demand that West Bank representatives be allowed to attend the Council sessions in Jordan. They undoubtedly would have been a moderating force in the Council's deliberations, and could have reinforced

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THE SHARON TRIAL

Ambition Gone Haywire

The libel suit against Time magazine being pressed in New York by Ariel Sharon is one of his more brilliant maneuvers. It is intended to attain several aims in one fell swoop.

The most ambitious of them is the industry and commerce minister's drive to gain leadership of the Israeli government. At first glance this may seem exaggerated and even irrelevant--what connection can there be between a libel action against an American news magazine and Sharon's chances of becoming prime minister?

The fact is, Sharon has proven during the legal proceedings that his remarks in New York are not directed to the jury, but rather at the Israeli public.

His first ploy was to establish complete identification between himself, the State and the Jewish people. Sharon did not initiate the trial only to defend his personal honor. He might even have "forgiven" the accusations made against him had he thought that they damaged him alone, but he clearly stated that the State of Israel was slandered and that such a slander could not and should not be forgiven.

This isn't the first time that Sharon has behaved in this "l'etat c'est moi" manner. He reacted in much the same way when the Kahan Commission (appointed by the Israeli government to investigate the brutal

massacres at Sabra and Shatilla) published its report, and in Sharon's words: "put the mark of Cain on my brow and on the brow of Israel."

And Sharon does not stop at defending his personal honor and the honor of the State of Israel. He is also attempting to turn the trial into a "battle against anti-Semitism."

It is not yet clear whether Sharon is trying to build an image of himself as Mendel Bailiss or as Dreyfus.

It may be assumed that Sharon has scored points in this trial, not with the jury, but with a large segment of the Israeli population which is not profoundly interested in the details of the trial. He creates the image of being the champion of the national honor and the leader of the fight against the "anti-Semites" in the American media.

Sharon's second priority in this trial is to undermine the conclusions of the Kahan Commission, which made specific references to the former defense minister. The commission placed the responsibility for the events at Sabra and Shatilla squarely on Sharon's shoulders--to the extent that he was relieved of his governmental duties.

The commission's conclusions were carried out by a government which was run not by Sharon's enemies, but by his allies, with Menachem Begin as its prime minister. It was Sharon who lost control and branded himself



with the mark of Cain--not the Kahan Commission report.

Ariel Sharon has taken a big gamble in his libel suit against Time. He has made a wide flanking maneuver in order to attack the Kahan Commission in New York. If he wins the trial, that victory will be the basis for his claim that the Kahan Commission's conclusions are null and void, and he will return as one who has erased from his brow and that of Israel the stigma of Cain. All of which has no real importance because the trial in New York has no authority to judge the validity of the commission's findings. What is important is the rationale which Sharon will employ. He hopes that he who gained glory on the march through Lebanon will be vindicated in an American courtroom.

And as an experienced military man, Sharon knows how to battle on more than one front at a time. While maintaining his "national front" in New York, he does not abandon the struggle within the Likud, or to be more accurate, within his Herut party. He has a good chance of winning that struggle--and upon returning from New York he will make every effort to "straighten out" the situation at home, as well.

(This article is excerpted from a more in-depth piece written by Mark Geffen, former editor-in-chief of Al HaMishmar.)

GET OUT NOW

With the conclusion of the "One Hundred Days of Grace" accorded the national unity government, the "Peace Now" movement has promised to renew the massive public outcry for withdrawal from Lebanon.

"Peace Now" leader Tzali Reshef said the movement is particularly disappointed by the continued Israeli army presence in southern Lebanon

and the public pronouncements of Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin

In Reshef's opinion, certain elements within the national unity government are intent upon delaying Israeli withdrawal. And neither Peres nor Rabin has a clear-cut position in favor of withdrawal as they had prior to the national election last August.

HOW AND WHEN IN LEBANON

By JOHN GOLDBERG

"Parents Against Silence" is a grassroots non-partisan group which emerged on the Israeli political scene a few months after the Lebanese war broke out. The group, which is made up mainly of the mothers and wives of soldiers serving in Lebanon, has from the outset issued a single and unequivocal call -- "Bring the Boys Home!" It is perhaps indicative of the current political climate in Israel that a recent campaign by the group, along with members of the left-wing youth movements, was a resounding success.

In the campaign drivers were encouraged to place stickers calling for withdrawal from Lebanon on their car windows. Apparently, there were very few drivers who refused to comply. Indeed, the country's roads are now full of cars bearing the group's white stickers with a red arrow indicating a U-turn and symbolizing the call for a return of Israeli forces.

There appears to be a wide consensus in Israel today that the Lebanese adventure was a failure. Most people

are convinced of the futility of the Israeli occupation and sickened by the human expense (604 Israelis killed, to date) and the material waste (\$600,000 per day). They also realize that eventually, in one way or another, Israel must withdraw its troops from that torn and ravaged land. They know that neither Druze, Christians nor Moslems want the Israelis. The questions that still divide politicians and the general public have to do with the how and when.

The Likud, which is still unwilling to admit its responsibility for the dismal adventure, talks of maintaining an unwavering stand in the hope of convincing the Syrians to accept some form of agreement preventing terrorist activity in south Lebanon. The Labor Party, with Prime Minister Shimon Peres at its head, is caught between a desire to withdraw from Lebanon as soon as possible and an attempt to avoid being blamed for giving in to Syrian intransigence and, more important, for any incidents which may occur following withdrawal to the international border.

As such, its leaders seem to place their faith in partial with-

drawals, agreements with the Lebanese government and the ability of the Christian militia in the south to serve as a buffer between the terrorists and Israel. The existence of the national unity government has only worsened their dilemma. For now the Labor leaders cannot take any steps which are unacceptable to the Likud.

The occupation of Lebanon is a no-win situation and therefore the sooner we get out, the better. The Syrians, convinced of the strategic importance of their occupation of the Bekaa Valley are not going to budge. The Shi'ite terror in the south is not going to diminish, it will only increase as the occupation continues. The blood toll and economic price is going to rise.

Israel must withdraw immediately from Lebanon. It must reach an agreement with the local forces in southern Lebanon on the creation of a buffer zone along the northern border. UNIFIL troops must play a major role in maintaining quiet in the region. The withdrawal must take place regardless of the desires or wishes of the other parties and forces in Lebanon. The Israeli actions can, and indeed must, be unilateral. Finally, Israel must realize that the task of ensuring Israel's security will remain the responsibility of Israeli troops stationed along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

The Israeli government must come to terms with the fact that any precautions which we may take cannot ensure a completely secure border. Palestinian terrorism cannot be obliterated through military means. Until the Palestinians are granted their right to self-determination terror will remain one of their forms of struggle. We cannot, however, wait until they achieve their legitimate rights. The price is too great. A withdrawal from Lebanon is both possible and acceptable to Israeli public opinion.

It must be done now.



UNEMPLOYMENT

A Social Trauma

By MICHA'EL ZEIGLER

The latest pronouncements of Labor and Welfare Minister MOshe Katzav (Likud) regarding the government's inability to prevent unemployment confirm our fears that the Ship of State is being navigated by those who do not see unemployment as a major economic and social problem. Instead, they consider unemployment to be a legitimate policy in the battle to halt inflation and to reverse the balance of payments deficit.

When the national unity government was formed, Prime Minister Shimon Peres insisted that his coalition came into being in order to confront the nation's economic crisis. Opponents of the unity government, especially Mapam, warned that the political formation -- Labor/Likud -- would lead to policies whose main ingredients would be recession and unemployment. Unfortunately, it appears that we were right.

Even the constant increase in vocal protests by Israeli workers over their mounting financial hardships has not managed to penetrate the "hear-no-evil/see-no-evil" attitude of the government regarding the social consequences stemming from the trauma of unemployment.

If we analyze who are the main victims of unemployment, we will find that they are the same segment of the population which suffered from inadequate methods of absorbing new immigrants in the 1950s. As a reminder -- the faulty absorption of these immigrants (North African and Oriental Jews) is causing social tensions and severe economic gaps until this very day. These unemployed masses from the development towns and depressed neighborhoods are now being joined by their sons, and other Israeli youth who have just returned from the Lebanese hell.

This mass of unemployed must be seen as a natural breeding ground for

the rise of alienation and social malaise, intensification of the ethnic gap and its concurrent animosities, malevolent behavior towards the Israeli Arabs, and above all, an inclination towards the madness of Meir Kahane.

It appears that the navigators of the Ship of State have decided to ignore this social tragedy, which must lead to malignant behavior patterns and will raise doubts as to the continued existence of normalcy in the State of Israel.

Young Mapam has therefore decided to combat unemployment by raising public consciousness to its consequences. Young Mapam has coined the slogan "Let us work in this country" in order to emphasize the right of every individual to support himself or herself with honor. In addition, we have been and will continue to be a partner in every protest action in the streets of Israel whose purpose is to fight unemployment.

A social disaster is upon us, and as the young of any society must suffer the sins of their fathers, Young Mapam is determined to do its all to guarantee that this government will not destroy our future.

PLO - Cautious Optimism

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the moderate views which characterize West Bank political leaders.

All in all, the paramount question of all observers of the Palestinian Council, be they doves or hawks, optimists or pessimists, concerns the ultimate goal of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Do the "territories" to be exchanged for peace include Haifa and Tel Aviv? Is the inferred reference to a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel or instead of the Jewish State? The Palestinian National Council did not truly come any closer to clarifying these points. In all fairness, as doves in Israel are well aware, no Israeli government, Labor or Likud-led, has earned points for its specificity on this subject. However, since here we are dealing with the Palestinian National Council, it is for that forum to receive "marks" and -- as a dove -- I can only give it

"just passing."

At best, I must take courage from my "interpretation" of the discussions and statements made there. It seems that the PLO and Hussein have come to terms with the permanent presence of the State of Israel. The absence of reference to the Palestinian Covenant and its unacceptable articles referring to Israel can be interpreted as encouraging. Leaving the door open to a political solution, rather than the "armed struggle" also gives more hope that we may be seeing the beginning of a rational approach by the PLO.

In addition, the internal struggle in the PLO and its expression at the Council cannot be ignored. The absence of the Syrian-backed Palestinians, the rejection of Arafat by Damascus, the doubts (till the last minute) about an acceptable forum for the Council, all made the conven-

ing of the Council a gamble which Arafat took -- and won. But it cannot be brushed aside. The Syrians and their Palestinian clients are not merely "mistaken and mis-led" in their efforts to dethrone Arafat. They are deadly rivals to be taken seriously. The murder of Fahd Kawasme is proof of this. If ever anyone could say, after this murder, "there but for the grace of God, go I" it is Yassar Arafat, himself.

All told, the Palestinian National Council was a step forward. It revealed new possibilities for communication; it brought Jordan closer to direct involvement in the debate, and it exposed political maturity on the part of the leaders of the PLO. Granted, all these developments are in small measures, but after decades of unremitting enmity and struggle, even these tentative steps are to be welcomed.

(Lennie Fritsch is the former director of Mapam's North American Desk.)

FAHD KAWASME**A Victim of Fear**

PLO moderate Fahd Kawasme was not a victim of war, rather he was victimized by the fear of peace.

Kawasme was gunned down in Amman, Jordan, on Dec. 29 by someone or some persons who received their orders either from Syria or the extremist wing of the Palestinian camp. Four years earlier, he had been exiled from the West Bank by the Israeli government--at the time he was the duly-elected mayor of Hebron.

The question may be asked, who should rightfully have feared Fahd Kawasme?

Our answer is two-fold--both the radical, pro-Syrian front in the PLO and the extremist, annexationist right-wing in Israel.

Kawasme was the enemy of all those, on both sides, who recoil at the prospect of peace and reject the inevitability of co-existence. He was symbolic of a new breed of Palestinian leaders who have grown with changing political realities. Leaders who have come to recognize that Palestinian interests can only be served by ceasing to stumble on a treadmill of outdated animosities.

Kawasme, and those like him, are truly dangerous to that blindly fanatic element of the PLO which finds its natural expression in violence and cold-blooded murder. They are equally dangerous to the ultra-nationalist forces in Israeli politics, who insist that there are no moderate voices in the Palestinian camp, that--in a word--there is no one for us to talk with.

Kawasme, by rejecting the notion of never-ending war and conflict, became a sworn enemy of those who oppose peace and reconciliation.

His murder was both a blatant warning to Yassar Arafat and a bald-faced attempt at crippling the increased standing of West Bank leaders within the ranks of the PLO.

We can only hope that he will not have died in vain. That the moderate forces in the PLO will find the courage to continue his campaign for sanity, and that we, the peace forces in Israel, will find new partners who are willing to sit and talk, in the long-overdue effort to put an end to this satanic tango of blood and death. (AA)

tives of all area nations, shows a shift towards seeking a political solution to the conflict.

4. The lack of political maneuverability on the part of Popular Front and Democratic Front leaders was exposed. It wasn't clear whether they themselves decided not to come to Amman or someone in Damascus gave them the order to travel to Moscow rather than to neighboring Jordan, while their brothers were conducting the National Council.

5. All past and present attempts to establish an alternative to the PLO failed, perhaps due only to the fact that Arafat has become a symbol of the Palestinian struggle.

6. King Hussein's new phrase--"territories in exchange for peace"--will almost certainly become the common denominator in a new constellation within the Arab world, which will act alongside Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. It is unfortunate that this proposal received only mute support from the PLO itself.

Finally, it was clear to everyone that not only the internal democracy of moderate Palestinians left the impression that the PLO would like to wrap itself in the mantle of compromiser and peace-seeker, but also the thawing of relations between the Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian triangle and their effective cooperation for common gain.

Still, the peace forces in Israel were disappointed by the failure to embark upon a clear-cut course of dialogue based on mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinians.

The PLO in its present state is stronger politically and weaker militarily, a trend which is in and of itself positive. The forces of peace and progress in Israel should exploit this move toward moderation within the PLO. And thereby seek to initiate such a dialogue, whose purpose is to accelerate PLO moderation and to advance towards talks with the authentic representatives of the Palestinian Arabs.

(Idris Mawassi is the recently-elected secretary-general of Young Mapam from the Arab sector.)

PLO - A New Direction

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change for peace"--which was anxiously awaited not only by the Palestinians, but also by world opinion.

This may have been the first time that Israeli and West Bank Arabs could readily follow the Council debates in Amman. King Hussein wisely decided to televise the Council sessions so that the Palestinians in the occupied territories could observe and form opinions on the debates themselves, on the judicious procedures of the PLO leaders in taking decisions, and the democratic discussions in the plenum. The televised Council debates lent a new dimension to the vibrant discussions on the Palestinian question within Israel, by bringing the PLO into our

living rooms via the television screen rather than as the perpetrators of terrorist-attacks.

The 17th Palestinian National Council in Amman underlined the following facts: -

1. Neither Begin nor Sharon could extinguish and bury the Palestinian problem, which remains the heart of the Arab-Jewish conflict.

2. The PLO is no longer a Syrian puppet, and it strives to manifest the independence of its struggle without the intervention of any foreign entity.

3. The Palestinian call for an international peace conference under United Nations auspices, on the basis of existing U.N. resolutions, and with the participation of representa-

AGAINST THE CURRENT

Young Mapam and the Debate On the Sandinistas

By JOHN GOLDBERG

The question of Young Mapam support for the Sandinista government in Nicaragua has been the subject of lively debate among various party members of late. The Nicaraguan issue arose following the visit by Mapam MK Haika Grossman and International Secretary Avraham Rozenkier to Nicaragua and the recent elections held in that country. Speaking upon his return, Rozenkier noted that what he saw "lent authenticity to the claims of political pluralism in Nicaragua and indicates that the Sandinistas held free elections." (Progressive Israel, Nov.-Dec. 1984)

A dissident voice was then raised by Kibbutz Ein Dor member Eric Lee in The Jerusalem Post daily newspaper. Lee termed the Sandinista regime "a revolution betrayed" and attacked those in Israel and abroad who have ignored the suppression of civil rights in Nicaragua.

Members of the Young Mapam Foreign Affairs Committee are currently preparing a position paper on the issue. Some of the committee members recently participated in a meeting at the Knesset between MK Grossman and activists from the Israeli Committee for Solidarity with Nicaragua. Young Mapam members have also taken part in the solidarity group's activities --a public meeting at Kibbutz Harel and a demonstration outside the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv protesting U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. It appears that members of Young Mapam will be joining the

groups regional secretariats in the near future.

Red Flags for Soviet Jewry

Passersby in Jerusalem are quite used to seeing demonstrations in support of Soviet Jewry outside the Jewish Agency building. Red flags, however, are usually burnt on such occasions rather than raised proudly. Thus the puzzled and sometimes annoyed looks of those Jerusalemites who came across a recent Young Mapam demonstration in support of Soviet Jewry were understandable.

Ran Hakin, secretary-general of Young Mapam, explained: "We wanted to show that it is possible to protest against Soviet suppression of human rights with red flags."

Socialism and the denial of basic human rights, the right to cultural expression and emigration, are a contradiction in terms. Young Mapam intends to continue to raise the issue of the oppression of Soviet Jews in the future as well.

Let Us Work

Young Mapam has initiated a country-wide campaign against the government policy of creating unemployment. The campaign includes a petition-drive, leaflets and stickers. It stresses the need to fight unemployment and comes in the wake of signs of growing unemployment in Israel. As usual, it is the young--and recently discharged army veterans in particular--who are the first to be affected.

In its petition, Young Mapam notes that work is not a form of punishment

but rather a creative endeavor and the only real way to promote economic independence and growth.

The call issued by Young Mapam is: "Let Us Work in This Country!"

Upsurge in Campus Support

A rally recently organized by Tzavta, the Mapam-affiliated student group at Tel Aviv University, can serve as an indication of the upsurge of support for the socialist left on campuses.

The rally, on the topic: "The Israeli Left--1985", was attended by over 300 students who completely filled the university's largest hall.

Speaking at the rally, Dr. Gadi Yatziv, former Mapam political secretary, criticized the left for ignoring the country's social and economic issues while emphasizing only the questions of war and peace. He called for the drawing up of a left-wing alternative to the government's economic policy, which is based on the creation of wide-scale unemployment and erosion of real wages.

MK Yossi Sarid of the Citizens' Rights Movement (Ratz) related to the recent political developments in the area. Declaring support for Labor MK Darousha's intention to address the Palestinian National Council in Amman, Sarid bitterly attacked the Labor Party for forcing him to abort the attempted mission. Sarid said that Labor wants peace so long as it has no bearer. Yet when a real chance for peace appears, Labor panics and rushes to prevent its becoming a reality.

After a month of renewed activity on the campuses, the Mapam-affiliated groups appear to be becoming the focus of left-wing political action. The groups--coalitions of Mapam, Ratz and independent left students--are active on the four major campuses and their ranks are swelling. In a week-long campaign at Tel Aviv University, for example, more than 300 students indicated their willingness to join in the group's activities.

(John Goldberg is responsible for international relations in Young Mapam.)

In the Knesset

Anti-Racism Law

The Knesset voted recently to drop from its agenda two proposed laws intended to combat the growing problem of racism in Israel. The Laws were sponsored by Mapam and the Israeli Communist Party.

The Mapam law was originally submitted to the previous Knesset and enjoyed, then, the support of most members of the Labor Party. In the recent vote, however, they abstained rather than vote in favor of a bill which they had helped to draft.

Mapam MK Muhammad Watad reacted to the Knesset's rejection of his party's proposed law, saying:

"I don't know what else needs to happen before the Knesset enacts a law against incitement, discrimination and racism. The impression being given is that anything goes. Not just that it is permissible to harm the weak, but that it is almost a blessing. In certain places the racists are treated as heroes. Their voices and battle cries against the Arabs echo resonantly.

Enactment of this law is necessary for the defense of the society, the State and the Arab and Jewish public as one, against the spreading of the racist malediction."

"Voice of America"

MK Haika Grossman (Mapam) has demanded that the Israeli government abort negotiations on broadcasting "Voice of America" propaganda programs aimed at the Soviet Union from Israeli soil.

"Israel has more than enough conflicts with the Soviet Union and there is no need to add fuel to a fire which is not ours," she said. "There is no need to establish a 'Voice of America' station for anti-Soviet propaganda on our land. This is folly and harmful to Israel's own interests."

Limiting Kahane's Immunity

By a margin of 58 versus 36, the Knesset voted in late December to limit the parliamentary immunity of extremist right-wing MK Meir Kahane. This is the first time in Israeli history that the Knesset decided to restrict one of its member's freedom of movement.

During the course of a lively debate, Mapam MK Haika Grossman observed: "The man is not even worth having a speech made about him. He is about as interesting as last year's snow. What is of importance is his doctrine. It is the phenomenon (of Kahanism) which must be stamped out."

Mapam MK Yair Tzaban called upon the Knesset to mark the 50th anniversary of Hitler's Nuremberg Laws by enacting a law against racism. He called for a comprehensive educational campaign against racism in all the nation's public schools.

Nuclear Reactors

Several Mapam MKs have pressed for a Knesset debate on the acquisition of two nuclear reactors from France for the production of electricity, as proposed by Prime Minister Shimon Peres during his recent State visit to that country.

Mapam Secretary-General Victor Shemtov opposed the clandestine manner in which Peres has approached the issue, and called for an open debate which would allow an in-depth evaluation of the potential purchase before a final commitment is made.

MK Haika Grossman, Mapam political secretary, also demanded a public debate, saying that the controversial issue of constructing nuclear reactors in such a small, densely-populated country requires a preliminary Knesset review.

Political Debate

The Knesset held a political debate on Dec. 3, following the closing of the Palestinian National Council in Jordan. Prime Minister Shimon Peres presented the government's response to the council's deliberations, and MK Elazar Granot spoke on behalf of Mapam.

Some excerpts from his speech:

"...I don't know if a dove of peace is floating above Jerusalem. Perhaps this strange white bird is only a white raven, some sort of bird-beast which doesn't really exist--a white raven is passing over the city and in Jerusalem they don't give a damn. They simply don't care. The earth is trembling beneath our feet, streams of molten lava, of malice, of hatred, of interests. Everything is colliding and intermingling. New options are available --maybe for the moment, or the hour. Policy is grasping the moment, the hour..."

"...Members of Knesset, every day in which we do not move closer to peace is a day in which we move towards war. It is in our power to determine whether the Middle East will be a river on which a skull is floating, of which it is said: 'because you have drowned people, others have drowned you and at the last they that drowned you shall be drowned.' A horrible curse this continuation of the killing.

"Or will it be a river on which we cast the bread of peace in order to find it in the far-distant future?"

Levinger Go Home

Three MKs who visited the Palestinian refugee camp Dohaisha, have appealed to Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to expel Gush Emunnim spiritual leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger from the camp. Levinger has been squatting inside the camp in an unabashedly provocative act for some months.

Muhammad Watad (Mapam), Abdel Wahb Darousha (Labor) and Mati Peled (Progressive Peace List) wrote to Rabin: "The tension in the besieged camp is rising. The mounting bitterness may explode at any moment, and could set off a chain reaction which will engulf the entire West Bank."

Orthodoxy vs. Pluralism

Who Is A Jew?

(On Jan. 16 the Knesset rejected a controversial amendment to the Law of Return which would have qualified the definition of "who is a Jew." The amendment, which was defeated by a vote of 62 to 51, proposed adding the phrase--according to Halacha--to that part of the Law which refers to those Jews who have been converted to Judaism outside of Israel.

Voting against the proposed amendment were the Labor Alignment, Mapam, the Citizens Rights Movement, Hadash (the Communist Party), Shinui, the Progressive List for Peace, Yigal Hurvitz and three Liberal Party members from the Likud bloc. Voting in favor were the Likud, the Tehiya, the National Religious Party, Morasha, Agudat-Israel, Aharon Abu-Hatzira and Rabbi Menachem HaCohen from the Labor Party.

The failure of this attempt by the orthodox religious parties to usurp authority over all aspects of Jewish identity was a victory for those forces standing against religious coercion and the drive to transform Israel into a religious state. But the campaign has not ended, and a compromise is in the offing which would hand over judicial authority on the determination of who is a Jew in the state of Israel to the rabbinical courts. Following is an editorial from the Jan. 11 edition of Al HaMishmar, Mapam's daily newspaper, relating to this issue.)

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The crisis which threatened to snap the taut rope tying together all the loose ends of the (Israeli) government has calmed down. The calmness came not in the absence of, but rather as the result of far-reaching political concessions on the part of the Labor Party to its

religious and "nationalistic" partners -- and on the very sensitive issues of religious coercion and settlements on the West Bank.

While Labor did not agree to support changing the law "Who is a Jew," the compromise proposals which are crystallizing and being cooked up in the political kitchens, with the "Glatt Kosher" supervision of the religious parties, are not far from total surrender. Expanding the judicial scope of rabbinical courts, and placing the ultimate decisions on nationality under Halachic authority, are acts which will greatly accelerate the transformation of Israeli society into a religious state.

If the rabbinical court is authorized to determine who is a Jew and who is not a Jew, it will judge according to Halacha--only Halacha. Such a court will certainly not take

into account such considerations as cultural identification, common fate, conscience and self-definition. The concept "Jew" will be limited to religious dimensions only, and thus prove--ironically enough--the contention of Israel's enemies, that Judaism is not a nationality, but only a religion. And as such, it is doubtful whether Judaism has a right to its own nation. Sovereignty and statehood are derived from a secular view of nation and the right to self-determination. Therefore, it was not an accident of history that state-oriented Zionism based its world view on the idea of Judaism as a secular, national entity. Now, the Labor Party is prepared--in the name of preserving a unified coalition--to concede a point which is central to state-oriented Zionism, and to return absolute control over our national definition to Orthodox rabbis--almost as in the days preceding the Enlightenment.

Evening of Solidarity

"Mapam members have a double-edged moral obligation to express their solidarity with the plight of Soviet Jewry. As fellow Jews and as socialists who--in the name of socialism--criticize the Soviet Union, which portends to be a state which has fulfilled the socialist dream while it persecutes millions of its citizens."

So spoke Mapam Secretary-General Victor Shemtov at an evening "In Solidarity with Soviet Jewry" organized by Mapam in late December at the Izavta club in Tel Aviv.

Shemtov called upon Israel to refrain from playing an active role in the aggravation of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

"It is in our interest not to exacerbate the problems between the superpowers," Shemtov said. "During periods of detente there was aliyah. Israel should support policies which lead to understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union."

The Mapam secretary-general sent the following message to the Soviet Jews who are fighting for their national rights:

"You are not alone, an entire people stands behind you. Your struggle will not be in vain."

Terror Count

Despite the changing winds in the moderate wing of the PLO, the terrorist wing of the organization was not dormant during the past year. In 1984 there were 350 terrorist acts within the borders of Israel--as a result of these attacks 5 Jews were killed and 108 wounded.

In Lebanon, Palestinian and Shi'ite terrorist groups carried out 892 acts of terror against Israeli targets--28 Israelis were killed and 275 wounded.

With Ephraim Rozen

THE KIBBUTZ AND PARTY POLITICS

(Ephraim Rozen, a son and member of Kibbutz Sarid, was recently selected to serve as secretary of the Kibbutz Artzi Federation for a three-year term which began in August, 1984. Rozen is a veteran movement activist who has served in a number of important positions within the kibbutz federation. In this first installment of a two-part interview, Rozen discusses how the kibbutz movement relates to the new political and economic situations in Israel -- in the wake of the national unity government and Mapam's newly-declared independence.)

By AARON ALPERN

Q. How is the Kibbutz Artzi adapting itself to the new political reality of an independent Mapam?

A. The question is more complicated than simply saying we will do more of everything. We face many dilemmas in the overlapping relationship between Mapam and Kibbutz Artzi. The kibbutz movement offers massive support to the party, and that's good, but it is also problematic. In the final analysis, if we want to be an influential party, a party which has a firm base in Israeli society, than the party's urban sector must be the driving force in rebuilding Mapam's image.

The Kibbutz Artzi Federation has the advantage of being able to enlist human and financial resources, but it is limited in direct contact with the varying elements of Israeli society. As we always come from "without"--we are not part of "them"--our contribution begins with extending support to the party's city members, but the party's future depends on to what extent we find among them active partners.

The danger exists that the scope of human and financial resources which we can offer may narcotize the urban sector. The new commitments from the Kibbutz Artzi--more resources and activity--will bear fruit only if there is a parallel effort from the party's city branches. We must work together.

Beyond the question of human and financial resources, we will try to contribute in those areas where we may have a special advantage.

Q. For example?

A. We will make an effort to escalate the activities of Hashomer Hatzair (the Kibbutz Artzi youth movement), because this is an expansive movement which is located in many Israeli cities, development towns and poor neighborhoods, and educates thousands of youth. We will attempt to expand our sphere of influence among the young.

Similarly, we will undertake an informational campaign among high school students, who are unduly influenced by the political tenets of the Likud and the Israeli right-wing in general, including Meir Kahane.

Educating youth from underprivileged neighborhoods in absorption groups on the kibbutzim is one area in which we can build a solid base for capturing the young. Accordingly, we will try to increase the numbers of city youth who are educated on kibbutz.

Another advantage of the kibbutz movement is its great expanse -- the kibbutzim are spread out all over Israel. We neighbor many development towns, and we will try to exploit this relative proximity for political work.

Q. In the past, the proximity of kibbutzim to development towns has caused cross-cultural problems--how can this chasm be crossed?

A. Here we enter the realm of the kibbutz movement's limitations. The problem is our uniqueness. Kibbutz society is different, and its advantages are misconstrued by outsiders, who see us as alien, aristocratic, etc.

We developed a chain of regional factories, and we became employers. This created, in the eyes of development town residents, a troublesome image of the kibbutz--a conflict arose. To overcome this social schism we must act in a number of ways. One of them is dealing with the whose issue of integrating the workers at all levels of management in the regional factories -- creating a more collective atmosphere, or at least a more cooperative atmosphere, between the employees and the "bosses." This is one area in which we will need to take more drastic and visible action, in order to break, or at least soften, the alienation which exists between us--the factory owners--and the factory workers from the development towns. There is, today, a joint move on the part of the kibbutz movements and the Histadrut to emphasize this issue.

Q. Within this context of building bridges between the kibbutz movement and Israeli society--how can the kibbutzim contribute toward finding solutions to the increasingly serious problem of unemployment in Israel?

A. The problem is integral to the structure of the Israeli economy, and naturally cannot be solved by the kibbutz movement. It is the direct result of the policies, or oversights, of a government which thought Israel could be the Switzerland of the Middle East--a country based on stock market speculations and quick profits. The government did not bother to develop modern industries, or expand places of work and sources for production. The moment has arrived when we must pay the price of years of

- continued on next page ->

THE KIBBUTZ...

→ continued from previous page

misguided economic policies.

We must remember that the kibbutzim were founded on clear-cut principles of collective lifestyle, which enabled us to form this outstanding movement. Any significant changes in kibbutz principles, which emphasize self-labor, would place in doubt the continued existence of the kibbutz movement as a collective society.

All the same, during trying times, it is possible to offer partial solutions. Still, we should not forget two basic things--the kibbutz movement accounts for only 3% of the overall Israeli population, and if the entire Israeli economy is in a depression then kibbutz industries are affected as well. The kibbutz economy suffers, more or less, from the same problems as the national economy. Therefore, even if we wanted to compromise our principles in order to help, it would be virtually impossible due to these limitations.

Q. In light of the dismal economic situation in Israel, what measures can the kibbutz movement take to improve its own situation?

A. I said previously that we suffer from what happens to the Israeli economy in general, and that the kibbutz movement faces real economic difficulties. Still, we have advantages over the overall society because of the complex web of mutual guarantees between kibbutz and kibbutz, and between the movement and its kibbutzim. But when the whole movement is in a depression we must take extraordinary action on two levels. These actions appear to contradict each other, but with the proper setting of priorities they can complement each other. They are:

a) Lowering the standard-of-living by cutting back on investments and individual expenses.

b) Promoting economic growth by encouraging production and export.

(This is the first in a two-part interview. Next month--Kibbutz Artzi and the Diaspora.)

arab ~ israeli dialogue

A New Level?

By ZVI RUBEL

A noteworthy meeting took place in Jerusalem recently between West Bank political leaders and Israeli doves. Establishing a new level of Israeli-Arab dialogue, the meeting took place within the framework of the annual conference of the Board of Trustees of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East.

West Bank participants included Mustafa Natachi, ousted mayor of Hebron, Prof. Hisham Awartami, rector of Bir Zeit College, attorney Ziad Abu Ziad, and Hana Sinyora, editor of the East Jerusalem daily "El Fajr".

As the dialogue took place shortly after the Palestinian National Council in Amman, Jordan, the discussion naturally gravitated toward an assessment of the council debates.

The following points were raised by the West Bank participants, all of whom are firm supporters of Yasaar Arafat:

--The political viability of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in general, and the inhabitants of the occupied territories in particular, was proven.

-- Yassar Arafat's leadership of the PLO is undisputed.

-- The Palestinian movement gave witness to its independence from the Arab governments.

-- Several new factors are now affecting the political realities of the Middle East:

a) The reconciliation betw

a) The reconciliation between Hussein and the PLO and open talks about a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

b) Both Jordan and the PLO have re-established relations with Egypt

while the latter remains loyal to the Camp David accords.

c) The practical (if not formal) recognition of Israel as a reality within its pre-1967 borders.

Still, the West Bankers were generally pessimistic. It was strange to hear them saying: "There is no one to talk with." This has been the excuse of most Israelis regarding the lack of movement towards peace talks.

The West Bank figures also described present conditions in the occupied territories and demanded improvements in civil rights as well as new municipal elections.

The board members (both Israelis and Jews from abroad) expressed understanding for and support of the moral cause of the Palestinians. Some raised, however, the issue of the Palestinian Covenant--asking why it was not revised, in light of the aforementioned new political realities.

The Palestinians responded that this demand is not realistic, because the formal recognition of Israel will be an important bargaining chip in any future peace negotiations.

All efforts to point out the tremendous damage caused by the Covenant to the prospects for peace--that it plays into the hands of the chauvinist right-wing of Israel--were of no avail.

The meeting concluded with a consensus on threee-points:

-- mutual recognition

-- co-existence

-- the right of self-determination

for both Jews and Palestinians.

(Zvi Rubel was recently selected as one of Mapam's representatives to the Board of Trustees of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East.)

SOURCE ~ RESOURCE**Studies in Zionism**

By ERIC LEE

It is an ironic fact that interest in the past is often strongest among the young. In politics this may be quite explicit. For every tired veteran of the movement, weary of outmoded theories and outdated doctrines, there is a young idealist eager to delve deep into the movement's rich past.

Among the few Zionist publications which are deeply interested in the movement's past, Shdemot (English) and Jewish Frontier stand out. Both of these reprint classic socialist Zionist works frequently, including (in the case of Shdemot) the writings of Hashomer Hatzair founders, such as Meir Yaari. Both magazines have young editors.

But these reprints, interesting though they may be, are somewhat sporadic, not always well-chosen, and

leave us wanting to know more. Who exactly were Borochoch, Brenner, Gordon, Katznelson, Arlosoroff--and what were their beliefs and values? What in the socialist Zionist past which they represent is of value and interest to us today?

A remarkably intelligent journal which answers all these questions, and raises a few more, is Studies in Zionism. Edited by Dr. Anita Shapira, Berl Katznelson's biographer, and published by the Institute for Zionist Research at Tel Aviv University, this is an attractive, thick (issues run about 172 pages apiece) journal published twice a year, in May and October. It was founded in 1980.

Articles of special interest to socialist Zionists have included: "Yosef Haim Brenner's Attitude Towards Socialism and the Worker's Movement," "Torah and Labor: The Radicalization of Religion within a

National Framework," "Ber Borochoch. (a 22-page essay by Matityahu Mintz, a lecturer at Tel Aviv University), "The Origins of 'Jewish Labor' Ideology," by Dr. Shapira, "The Zionist Movement and the Arabs," "Binationalism: An Interpretation of Zionism, 1941-1947," by Elkana Margalit, professor of Social History at Tel Aviv University and author of the classic history of Hashomer Hatzair from its founding until the 1930s, and "Nachman Syrkin: Populist and Prophetic Stands in Socialist Zionism" (a 40-page essay by Jonathan Frankel, a lecturer at the Hebrew University).

The articles are serious, detailed and informative. I would recommend that Studies in Zionism be found in the home of every Zionist, but with one reservation. Its price. Like all academic journals, this one is overpriced. Subscriptions cost \$18 for 2 issues. Get your local library to subscribe, or convince a rich uncle that it's the perfect gift. Send subscriptions to: The Johns Hopkins University Press, Journals Division, Baltimore MD 21218, USA. And remember to mention that you read about it in Progressive Israel.

Israel Shtime is a bi-weekly journal on political, social and cultural affairs published in Tel Aviv since 1955.

The perfect gift for your parents, friends or neighbors to whom Yiddish is dear and would appreciate reading a serious journal bringing them articles on events in Israel, the Middle East and the world.

The journal is well-known in literary circles both in Israel and the Diaspora. Yiddish writers regularly contribute their works, so the reader will find fine literary selections.

The 1,000th edition of "Israel-Shtime" will appear in April, 1985 -- an excellent opportunity for enlisting subscribers and for collecting contributions or endorsements.

A sample of the journal is available, or an annual subscription (\$35). Write to "Israel-Shtime" POB 1777 Tel Aviv 61016 Israel.

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SHEMTOV RESIGNS

Makes Way For New Leadership



MK Victor Shemtov announced his resignation as secretary-general of Mapam (United Workers Party of Israel) at a recent meeting of the party executive committee. Shemtov, who turns 70 this month, served as secretary-general for six years. Following is the text of his statement:

"I am convinced, more than ever before, that Mapam today is in need of a younger secretary-general. Mapam has more young members than other political parties (in Israel), but in the public eye it has the reputation of being an old and aging party. Changing this image is an urgent and vital need of our movement. My resignation is one step in this direction.

"Two trends are developing within the party. One is encouraging and soothing. The other causes internal agitation and consternation.

"Our last party congress (June, 1983) left Mapam split in half. Mistrust and suspicion filled the vacuum and poisoned the atmosphere in party headquarters and in our branches. I won't say that the party has recovered from this illness, but no doubt in the past year the winds have calmed. The atmosphere has begun to change--mutual trust has increased, suspicion has abated and the lines between the camps have blurred, even if they have not completely disappeared. This process is encouraging and will continue.

"The second process was initiated by the Labor Party's decision to form a government with the Likud, which led to the dissolution of the Alignment. With our separation from this large bloc, to which we belonged for 17 years, a shockwave of excitement has engulfed the party.

"It became clear to us that during all the years of the Alignment we preserved the party foundation but we lost a good deal of our public support--particularly among the workers and the younger generation.

"In addition, the question--Mapam: where to?--has been raised with vigor. This question is part of a larger question: Where is the socialist-Zionist left headed? To

a fragmented left or the establishment of a new, unified force? The debate over these questions will continue, and I will yet have an opportunity to present my views to the entire party.

"There are two main challenges ahead of us--to strengthen Mapam and widen its public base, and to transform the party into a focal point for unity of the Israeli left.

"To attain these goals Mapam is in need of young, refreshing and dynamic leadership, which will be able to forge its own path and redefine the Israeli left. Even if there is the risk that new party leaders will make their own mistakes, as the veteran leadership made its own, I am certain that they will know how to wean from the movement's past without being strangled by it.

"At this time a new Mapam is being born. The hour of the young guard has arrived. The younger generation must arise and reform Mapam in its own image, as a continuation and revitalization of the Mapam which was formed by the founding generation. I am confident that they will meet this challenge, and I hope that they will be prudent enough to find the proper balance between the generations.

"The party must select a new secretary-general and central institutions without delay and get to work."

* * * *

The Mapam executive committee expressed its deep regard and esteem for Shemtov's leadership over the course of the past six years.

The committee stated:

"Victor Shemtov's leadership of the party came at a difficult time for the Israeli labor movement. He became a principal spokesman of the labor movement and of progressive Zionism, which fights for the kinship of all nations within Israel."

Procedures for the selection of a new secretary-general at a meeting of the Mapam Central Committee have already been set in motion.

NO MORE KATYUSHAS?

During a recent visit to Kiryat Shimona, General Uri Or, commander of the northern front, told his audience that it is impossible to guarantee that not even one katyusha rocket will fall on the northern settlements.

General Or was taken to task by the right-wing Tehiya party for making an ostensible "political" statement--which is out of bounds for army personnel.

The Tehiya has apparently ignored, or forgotten, the blatantly political

declarations of its own Rafael Eitan when he was chief-of-staff during the first year of the Lebanon war.

Furthermore, Mapam believes that General Or's observation was a realistic military assessment of the current situation in Lebanon.