



Protest in Washington D.C. against Shamir's March visit to the USA.

Laborite, described Israeli withdrawal from the (1967) occupied territories as a «first class defeat» which would lead to more «terrorism», and declared his unconditional support to the continuation of Israeli military rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As the uprising escalated, Peres took the opportunity on January 18th, to call for early elections. Friction has continued between the two blocs, focusing on the Schultz plan which Shamir has refused to bring to a vote in the cabinet, because in his words, «...people in Israeli are divided» (Associated Press, March 16th). A poll published in the Israeli newspaper *Hadashot* a few days earlier indicated that 46.2% of Israelis support the US plan, while 36.7% oppose it. Aides to Shamir are reportedly worried that negotiations with King Hussein of Jordan are irrelevant, since he has no control over the Palestinians (*International Herald Tribune*, March 3rd). In any case, by early March, Shamir had indicated that the Likud too was ready for early elections.

As of this writing, polls show that the Israeli electorate is almost evenly

divided between the two major blocks; several polls indicate a shift towards the smaller parties on both ends of the political spectrum, with the extreme right gaining most. On January 26th, the results of a straw poll conducted by a Tel Aviv institute showed that Likud would receive 33.6% of the votes versus the 31.9% it received in 1984. KACH would gain six Knesset seats versus the one it has now. The Tehiyeh Party would gain five seats versus the two it has now. (This ultraright party had three seats, but lost one when Rafael Eitan withdrew to form his own party, Ometz.)

Another poll was published by the Israeli daily *Maariv* on February 9th, also indicating that the shift to the extreme right was more pronounced than that to the left. This poll showed that the Tehiyeh Party would gain nine seats in the event of new elections. KACH would gain six, while HADASH (Front for Peace and Equality) and the Progressive List for Peace together would gain seven seats as opposed to the six they have now. The Citizens Rights Movement would gain six seats as opposed to the three it now has.

## REALIGNMENTS

This picture is further blurred by a series of political realignments, with Likud taking the brunt of the losses. In late January, Moshe Amirav, Central Committee member of the Herut Party (of Begin and the main component of the Likud), tore up his membership card, claiming that thousands concur with his position of searching for a new, practical path to peace, and would leave Likud as well.

Earlier in January, the mayor of Tel Aviv, Shlomo Lahet, a Likud member, had called on the government to «return» the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Jordan, in order to find a political settlement.

On February 1st, a new party was formed - the Center Movement, composed of Moshe Amirav and twenty other former members of Herut, and 363 persons from Shinui, the Independent Liberals and the Liberal Center Party. The president of this new party declared that it would be a centrist party, between the Likud and Labor, and would not be a partner in the Likud, but would ally with the party that calls for peace negotiations via an interna-