

# Coalition Government Rejects Peace

During the early stage of the Palestinian intifada, Israeli officials contended that it was a fleeting phenomenon, a temporary outburst which would subside in a short period of time - but they were wrong. The continuation, escalation and comprehensiveness of the intifada forced the Israeli government, military officials and media to admit that the intifada is organized and with no end in sight - it clearly represents a threat to Israel. The Israeli government and research centers formed special committees from the military and security divisions to find ways of aborting the intifada. These committees reached the conclusion that the intifada cannot be stopped; moreover, they warned of the dangerous ramifications of the intifada on the Israeli society. The intifada has unleashed a polarization process in the

Zionist state. On the one hand, more Israelis see the need for addressing the Palestinian cause. On the other, there is an even stronger trend moving further to the right, hardening Zionism's most racist and aggressive characteristics. As the intifada continues, this polarization deepens. Yet to date, the government's position has not undergone substantial changes, as is clear from the contents of the Shamir plan.

## REPRESSION IS A CONSTANT

In the beginning of the intifada, the Israeli government position was to consider repression the only method for dealing with it, rejecting any political discussion. On this basis, on December 24, 1987, the Israeli cabinet approved the methods to be used to suppress the

intifada, including the infamous «shooting to kill» policy. Three weeks later, on January 17th, the entire cabinet endorsed the brutal measures being used by the occupation army. This was about the time Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin proclaimed the brutal policy of «might, force and blows», i.e. breaking bones. Later in January, Rabin announced still more measures against anyone who participates in the intifada. Shmuel Goren, coordinator of activities in the occupied territories was critical of journalists' use of the term *popular uprising*. He and Shamir continued to charge that the demonstrations were begun by a small number of «terrorist provocateurs,» denying that they articulated the feelings of the majority of the population. Within the first three weeks of the intifada, the Israelis had

Shamir trying to sell his election plan.

