

arrested 1,200 Palestinians and on January 23, 1988, for the first time since 1967, emergency powers were used in East Jerusalem to impose a curfew. Rabin then forecast on March 24, 1988, «The residents of the territories are beginning to feel exhausted.»¹ He was wrong. Then he said, «We have good people, good Arabs, there's a few hotheads being roused up by phone calls from Abu Jihad in Tunis.»² Hence, the April 1988 inner cabinet decision to assassinate Khalil Al Wazir was taken and implemented. Still, the Israelis were referring to the intifada as only «riots.»

The second stage of Israeli official policy was to continue the repression while searching for a political outlet via Jordan and some Palestinians in the occupied territories. In a *Newsweek* interview, Shamir said that Israel would only agree to negotiate with its Arab neighbors without pre-conditions, thus offering direct talks anticipating the results of «peace for peace» as Shamir calls it, or really «peace for nothing.» Shamir later said, «There is no PLO option. There will be no Palestinian state declared under occupation... and if such a state is declared this will be most dangerous for the people in the territories.»³ But with the Jordanian move of severing legal and administrative ties with the occupied West Bank on July 31, 1988, the door was closed to the Jordanian option. Still the government did not face reality. It swiftly intensified repression, deluding itself that this was working as was apparent in Rabin's comments in autumn 1988, «Plastic bullets have reduced violence in the territories» and «The use of live ammunition reveals a downswinging of the uprising.»⁴ Rabin even had the audacity to forecast on November 16, 1988, that within six months the intifada would die out, but he was wrong again.

Eventually, some superficial gestures were made by Israel in order to look good in the international arena. Shamir said, «I don't believe in conferences and things like that, but if it can help someone that these negotiations be held under some formal auspices of the superpowers or the UN, I don't mind, as long as the negotiations are direct

and on the condition that the external bodies do not intervene in the content of negotiations.»⁵ Shamir also accepted the idea that the US and Soviet Union host talks held under UN auspices.

Meanwhile, Rabin continued with his carrot and stick tactics, such as his January 20, 1989 proposal to have neutral, non-UN supervision of elections in the occupied territories, and considering freeing jailed Palestinian leaders who would be willing to negotiate with Israel. However, the carrot is nothing compared to the stick.

The third stage is the continuation of repression and looking for a political outlet via Palestinians in the occupied territories, including followers of the PLO. This strategy can best be exemplified by Rabin's scheme. His plan has three stages; it begins with a three to six month period of calm (after the intifada has been suppressed), and then elections in the territories take place. These elections would serve to establish some sort of governing council to handle Palestinian self-administration over an interim period of time. Then those elected officials would be delegates to an international conference that would in turn negotiate a final settlement. Although Rabin only refers to the participation of Palestinians from the occupied territories, his plan hints that they could be acting on behalf of the PLO, because he offered at this point to release from administrative detention Faisal Husseini who is known to be affiliated with the PLO. Foreign Minister Moshe Arens also added in March that he did not object to negotiating with Palestinian personalities who support the PLO but are from the occupied territories. Rabin realizes that there must be political talks; he is quoted in February at an inner cabinet meeting as saying, «It is not possible to put an end to the intifada militarily.»⁶ Then he said on May 8th, «The present measures are of no use, the only way is through a political solution.»⁷

Both the Labor and Likud wings of the government realize talks must occur but somehow fantasize that a non-PLO Palestinian partner will materialize; this illusion is due to their fear that talking to the PLO will eventually lead to the creation of an independent

Palestinian state and be interpreted as a reward for the intifada. The government's official positions, which both Likud and Labor agree on, are the following:

1. No withdrawal from united Jerusalem which is the eternal capital of Israel.
2. No to a Palestinian state; Israel's eastern border will always be the Jordan river; no other sovereignty over the Gaza Strip as well.
3. No withdrawal from the Golan Heights.
4. Settling the problem of Palestinian refugees should be a part of any solution.
5. No Palestinian right to repatriation.
6. No to negotiations with the PLO.
7. No to a fully-empowered international peace conference.
8. Ruling out total Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 territories and no non-Israeli military force will be allowed to enter the West Bank.
9. Lastly, the Palestinians in the occupied territories should practice some form of self-administration in regards to their internal affairs.

In regards to the settlements in the occupied territories, there is no intention of dismantling them. In fact, there was a decision by the coalition government to build eight more, of which three have already been built. Shamir views these as Israel's security against a possible Palestinian state.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The culmination of all of the previously mentioned plans, statements and tendencies has come about in the form of the Shamir plan which was first introduced during his April visit to the US. This plan is based on four points:

1. An expansion of the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel, rejecting any «land for peace» formula in the occupied territories.
2. Calling upon the Arabs to quit hostilities and the economic embargo on Israel, and begin negotiations.
3. Resolving the Palestinian «refugee problem perpetuated by the Arab governments» while offering what Shamir termed decent housing and dignified living for the Palestinians.
4. So-called free and democratic elec- ►