

tions, by which Shamir means free from «the atmosphere of PLO violence, terror and intimidation,» with the aim of creating a delegation of Palestinians who would negotiate with the Israeli government an «interim period of self-governing administration to be followed by negotiations for a permanent settlement.»

Further details of the plan include that residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would elect 10 representatives who would participate in talks with Israel in order to negotiate a five year period of limited self-administration. These 10 would be responsible for the administration of the territories. Subsequently, after three years have passed, they would negotiate a final settlement on the future status of the occupied territories.

Shamir's plan was formally approved by the Israeli cabinet on May 14th in a 20-6 vote. Science Minister Ezer Weizman and another Labor cabinet member voted against the proposal because it avoids negotiating with the PLO, whereas Sharon, two others from Likud and one member of the National Religious party voted against for fear that this proposal would lead to a Palestinian state.

One of the reasons why the plan was approved by a large majority is because controversial topics were skirted. Some of these issues include: what the final

settlement will consist of; if the uprising must stop before elections are held; if the residents of East Jerusalem will be able to vote; and lastly, if there will be some type of international supervision. Of course Shamir has clearly said no to all of the above. In regards to the final settlement, an independent Palestinian state is ruled out in favor of continuing Camp David with self-administration, perhaps a confederation with Jordan or Israel. In regards to aborting the uprising, it is obvious that Shamir continues to demand this. He was quoted by Israeli radio as saying that he told the cabinet that the plan would enable the government to take a harder line in suppressing the uprising. The residents of East Jerusalem will most likely not be able to vote since they are residents of the «capital of Israel,» and lastly, as Shamir says, there's no need for international supervision since Israel is well-known for its democracy and fair election practices!

Shamir also added while in the US that he would not give up one inch of land, nor talk to the PLO or accept a Palestinian state. Shamir still demands direct talks with Jordan, Egypt and Palestinians from the occupied territories. He also rejected any PLO participation in supervising the elections and said that only Palestinians from the occupied territories could be involved in such supervision.

Of course there are many reasons for the introduction of such a plan. Chief among them is the expressed purpose to end the intifada and to create an alternative leadership to the PLO, in essence to split the Palestinians and to maintain control over the occupied territories. The plan aims to put the diplomatic ball in the PLO's court, giving Israel a democratic facade to change its tarnished image in the international arena, while at the same time trying to further the Camp David accords.

It is no wonder that the PLO and the Palestinian people reject this proposal because there is nothing whatsoever in it that is in their interest. This is yet another imperialist-Zionist scheme to try to abort the intifada and return to the status quo which is needed if their interests in the area are to be protected. Obviously, they see the winds of change blowing against them. One thing the Israeli government should keep in mind is that when the leadership of the intifada raised the slogan of freedom and independence, it was because they mean to achieve just that.

1 *Al Fajr*, April 17, 1989

2 *Middle East Report*, May-June 1988

3 *Israel and Palestine*, September 1988

4 *Al Fajr*, April 17, 1989

5 *Middle East*, February 1989

6 *Destour*, Arabic, February 10, 1989

7 *Voice of Israel*, Arabic, May 8, 1989

