



# The Intifada Faces New Zionist Violence

Any hope of a breakthrough in the political impasse was thwarted after the formation of the new Israeli government, a coalition made up of fundamentalist and ultra-right-wing parties, including Geula Cohen's Tehiya and Raphael Eitan's Tsomet. Eitan once referred to the Palestinians as cockroaches, and like many other ministers in this new government, he would rather see them exterminated or at least expelled.

by Maher Salameh

The «Greater Israel» government put the issue of immigration and absorption foremost among its national objectives. Despite international protest against the settling of new immigrants in the 1967 occupied territories, Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has planned the building of 20,000 housing units in the Jerusalem area which was annexed by Israel after its occupation in 1967. A map of the occupied territories printed in Russian was distributed to all absorption centers handling Soviet immigrants. The map includes the names and telephone numbers to contact for those interested in settling in the 1967 occupied territories (*Jerusalem Post*, June 20th). During the month of May, 30 families of Soviet Jewish immigrants were settled in the Golan Heights settlement of Kitsrin. In addition, the influx of tens of thousands of Soviet Jews has created a severe housing crisis in Israel, with the housing ministry encouraging Israelis to settle in the 1967 occupied territories by providing them with material incentives.

This move leaves no illusions about Israel's intentions of circumventing any efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. In the words of Shamir: «It would be madness on our part to agree to any concession whatsoever in an area (the West Bank) which is the soft underbelly of Eretz Yisrael» (*Jerusalem Post*, June 12th). If Israel succeeds in absorbing the projected one million new Soviet Jewish immigrants, perhaps the new «soft underbelly» will be Jordan!

On the military front, the new government's plan was expounded by Defense Minister Moshe Arens. In an interview with Israeli television, Arens

osed in both the Shamir and Baker plans. Arens fears such elections would «create problems and complicate the issues;» such complications would be the presence of a UN team to monitor general elections, making it difficult for the Israelis to rig them.

On the other hand, he is escalating repression through the increased use of collective punishment, such as house demolition, while simultaneously reducing the presence of troops in certain areas, in hopes of dampening popular resistance.

Meanwhile, vigilante violence increased sharply after two Israelis were found dead in the Jerusalem area on August 6th. Upon hearing the news and before the arrest of any suspects, Israeli settlers and vigilantes went on a rampage against Palestinians. In the ensuing frenzy, two Palestinians were killed and over a hundred injured in the Jerusalem area. Another Palestinian woman was killed near the Kiryat Arba settlement in what the Israeli police admitted was an act of revenge. A 40-year-old Palestinian man was killed on August 7th by an Israeli mob inside the green line, when he was dragged from his car and beaten to death. His pregnant wife and their six children also received injuries. The rampage continued for three days in many parts of occupied Palestine, resulting in extensive damage to property and many injuries. The settlers' ►

criticized his predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, particularly for his belief that there cannot be a military solution to the intifada. Arens described Rabin's conclusion as «a fundamental mistake,» and added that «when such a solution becomes possible, we will implement it.»

Arens' strategy vis-a-vis the intifada is two-pronged. On the one hand, he is attempting to revive the Israeli policy of finding an alternative leadership in the occupied territories in a vain effort to exclude the PLO, thereby defeating the intifada politically. After finding «his men,» Arens proposes to conduct municipal elections instead of general elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as propo-

*Israeli patrol in Jerusalem's Old City*

-Tordai

