

This is not the way to Mideast peace

FROM SADDAM Hussein's future to the Arab-Israeli "peace process" there's a general undertone of apprehension that today's configurations in the Middle East are unstable and that the "peace process" isn't likely to bring peace.

While the diplomats posture at the starting gate for both position and psychological advantage, the Middle East community of scholars, diplomats, activists, and advocates has been anxiously waiting the arrival of this month - the month of the long-trumpeted opening of the latest "international conference."

No one wants to miss the train and yet no one wants to be in the first car if and when the train crashes.

The Americans increasingly seem to want to appear "even-handed," but the realities of their most important positions, the outlays of their substantial funds, and the flow of their arms, all combine to make it clear whom they are married to versus whom they occasionally dance with.

One notable exception to the general rule of hesitancy and wait-and-see attitudes is a rather iconoclastic individual - but also a quite serious and a quite sincere activist and writer - living in Paris.

Maxim Ghilan is a former Israeli who long, long ago fought in the infamous Stern Gang alongside today's Israeli Prime Minister - all this, of course, before he saw the light.

In the sixties Ghilan wrote "How Israel Lost Its Soul". Penguin Books made it available in paperback but I doubt it's in print these days. But it is a volume still worth searching the stacks in your library for and studying - for Maxim Ghilan was an early prophet of doom and he was pretty much on target. And like most premature prophets he's been scorned by most, followed by few, respected and even adored by some.

Searching for his own soul Ghilan exiled himself in Europe, becoming a very early champion of the PLO and Palestinian rights. On the Jewish, and especially on the Israeli side of the line, Ghilan

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FROM WASHINGTON

NOT THIS WAY

was a pioneer, a visionary, a fighter for truth and justice. Moreover, he was all these things at a time when concepts of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation were hardly even dreamed of by many who today use such terms as their own.

Whatever one thinks of Ghilan's style, personality, or modus operandi - and he and I have certainly had our run-ins over the years - Maxim Ghilan is a man of conviction, a man of principle, a man of courage, decency and vision.

Maxim's highly personalized publication, ISRAEL & PALESTINIAN REPORT, has in recent months been reduced to fragility. Past financial support from such luminaries as Nahum Goldmann on the Jewish side, and I suspect some Palestinians on the Arab side, has dwindled. He, like many others who have tried to struggle based on principle and independence, has been victimized by events of recent years. His rare refusal to sell his soul is admirable; but those who know him know very well that he has had to pay many prices.

Maxim has also gotten on in years. His former offices have been greatly reduced both in size and personnel - most of whom over the years were dedicated semi-volunteers. But today Ghilan and his publication, which in past decades developed a reputation for periodically crying wolf at the door and pleading for funds, truly can't even support a

skeleton operation.

These days "I&P", as its faithful followers know it, is a little fold-over newsletter of a few pages though just a year ago it was more of a substantial political magazine with unique features over-filled with information hard to come by (especially in English).

But still today in various cities worldwide, an organization Maxim initiated, the International Jewish Peace Union, IJPU, continues to distribute I&P and follow its "teachings". Composed of well-meaning liberal and radical Jews, IJPU still has a very Zionist tinge to its ideas but it attempts in an honest and intellectual way to promote the idea of mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition which has been at the heart of Ghilan's teachings for more than two decades now.

But whatever hardships he currently is facing, Ghilan has his past. He has his integrity, and most importantly for him, I suspect, he has his independence and his deep convictions.

And so, featured on the cover of the August issue of I&P, #165 by the way, Ghilan obviously decided to boldly speak his mind in an essay he titled "Not This Way."

"Not This Way" is an important personal statement coming from an individual who has earned the right to speak up on these matters and to be taken seriously.

And so, for all these reasons, let me quote extensively:

Mackie

"This writer has now spent twenty-one out of thirty-three years of struggle in favor of a just Israeli-Palestinian peace working, overtly and covertly, for peace negotiations and reconciliation between Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians.

"It is therefore with a heavy heart that I tell now my Palestinian and Israeli friends: not this way, not this conference, not at the cost of giving up essentials. Not a conference without sovereign Palestinian representatives. Not to stopping Palestinians".

"This is a second Camp David that is being planned. If not checked and corrected, it will have similar awful results".

From this opening Ghilan then goes on to use the bulk of his "Not This Way" essay to discuss the "awful" results of the Camp David agreement of 1978 and the events that have taken place during the past 13 years, including, most recently, the Israeli-inspired American destruction of Iraq.

Then he concludes as follows: "Without truly sovereign Palestinian participation the regional peace conference - touted by Western media as the harbinger of Mideast peace and prosperity - will demolish what is left of Mideastern checks-and-balances, destabilize the Arab regimes and send Israelis and Jews world-wide into a new nightmare if terror and blood.

"As for the Palestinians", Ghilan prophesies, "they are to be cut up into little pieces and

then swallowed up. If the Palestinians are forced to become permanent serfs of the Israeli establishment rather than sovereign partners of Israel, if their land, water, children and homes are put permanently under the yoke of Israeli control, if Jewish-Israeli settlement becomes a 'normal', ever-expanding feature in the territories occupied since 1967, Israel will lose its chance to obtain real, lasting peace with those it must share the land with: the Palestinians.

"As to the Arab and non-Arab peoples of the region, bilateral agreements with Israel, which exclude the PLO, will cause them to lose whatever chances still exist (in spite of feudal egoism and cruel dictatorships) to develop and prosper free, enlightened, at peace.

"What can the Palestinians do?"

"They can tell the Americans and the Israelis: 'You did not stop your war against us. You are still killing us, torturing us, jailing us and taking our land and water, while settling our areas with hundreds of thousands of non-Arabs. Yet you say you want to talk peace with local leaders. The leaders of towns and villages thus spoliated. Very well. We/they shall talk. Meanwhile, there is no truce. We'll go on fighting you until either talks or war grant us peace, independence and freedom. When we reach these national goals, and only then, will we stop fighting and start cooperating.'"

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اختصاصي في جراحة الفم

معالجة الحالات الطارئة

طب اسنان للعائلة

يستقبل مراجعيه في عيادتيه المزودتين بأحدث الاجهزة الطبية لجراحة الفم والاسنان

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