

FROM



WASHINGTON

By Mark Bruzonsky



Mideast groups, in Israel, are not always what they seem

By Mark A. Bruzonsky

WASHINGTON - With Middle Eastern matters no longer peripheral to the general American public, a variety of new groups and organizations have come forward in recent months hoping to gain a following. And, of course, before the Gulf war, it was the Palestinian intifada that gave renewed vigor to efforts by non-government organizations and citizens groups.

A few weeks ago a couple of these groups were discussed — the misnomered Jewish Peace Lobby which is really an extension of the Israeli Peace Now movement and indirectly aligned with the left-wing of Israel's Labor Party; Sane Freeze, the main group that organized the quarter-million strong march against the war last January 26th; and Middle East Witness, an offshoot of the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz modeled after similar Latin American-focused "witness" programs of previous decades.

This hardly exhausts the subject.

But this week let me turn, as a diversion, to a couple of groups that have sprung up in Israel but which look to supporters in the U.S. both for financial contributions and to justify their existence by having a pro-Israeli public relations impact.

Take for instance the lofty sounding "Institute For Arab-Jewish Affairs".

At first blush one might think this a serious cross-cultural institution bringing together both Jews and Arabs. All the more so since the Institute now publishes a semimonthly newsletter titled — with both English and Arabic headings — "Arabs in Israel". But in reality the Institute for Arab-Jewish Affairs (IAJA) is no such thing.

activists (mostly Jews of course) "many of the participants said that the time is not yet ripe for meetings between Jewish and Arab students."

Another very telling sign is the fact that the publication is not in Hebrew, but rather in English. One reason is probably that there aren't many Israelis who are going to spend \$208 a year for an annual subscription to an eight-page newsletter.

But skeptical observers might feel justified in concluding that what's likely afoot here by another arm of Israel's liberal constituency is to get concerned and progressive American Jews to pay for their own propagandization.

After all, this isn't the first time Israelis have published English-language material to "influence" their friends abroad and gather up their funds and energies.

The better known monthly publication *New Outlook* was begun back in the 1950s by the left socialist Mapam party (also strongly connected with the Histadrut) which at the time had a historic connection to the Labor party as well. Actually, behind the scenes, there was also government money involved to get *New Outlook* off the ground — a useful vehicle to show Israel's "good face" abroad, especially to affluent American Jews whose support and funds might wither away but for such efforts.

Another new effort, with another new newsletter, is Rabbinic Human Rights Watch, soon to change its name to Rabbis for Human Rights.

Rabbi David Forman's introductory letter sent to large numbers of American Jews a few weeks ago says nothing about a Palestinian State, or even about a political settlement in the region. Rather, the stress for this group is that "it is incumbent upon us to continue

JANATA AUDIO VIDEO
OVERSEAS VIDEOTAPES
CONVERSIONS THROUGH
DIGITAL PROCESS
FROM PAL / SECAM TO
NTSC
OR VICE VERSA. \$19.95
(313) 522-7733

33463 FORD RD
GARDEN CITY, MI 48135

V C R
Repair & Cleaning

تصليح وتنظيف
جميع انواع اجهزة الفيديو
اسعار خاصة لائناء اجدالية العربية
مستعدون للحضور الى منازلكم
لفحص الفيديو مجاناً

SERVICE

(313) 582-7592

DEARBORN

New Luxu
in Dearb

AT THE PARK

SPACIOUS

- One and Two Bed
- Tudor Style
- Built-in Dishwash
- Mini-Blind Windo
- Treatments

CONVENIENTLY

- In Dearborn off Ford Road
- Minutes from Major Freeways
- Adjacent to a Dearborn City Park

CALL TO

We invite you to call or visit Dear

5701 Hartw
One block north of Ford Road, or
Boulevard. Now leasing. See ma

ADVERT

THE ARAB AME



HELLO FOL

I'm Woodrow W.

Your friendly neighborhood F

It's a fact - Detroit is the Capital of the Automotive World
It's a fact - Hamtramck is in the heart of Detroit,
It's a fact - Woody Pontiac is in the heart of Hamtramck
since January 2, 1940.

Woody Pontiac has survived wars and recessions, as we
perity, actively operated by the same dealer since incept
We may have sold your Mom, Dad and Granddad their
Pontiacs, so why not you? Visit us, you'll like us; come
we became the senior Pontiac Dealer in the Midwest, U

WOODY PONTIAC
12140 Jos. Campau

(313) 224-1000



no such thing.

Actually IAJA is an affiliate of The Histadrut, Israel's huge socialist-oriented Federation of Labour. The Histadrut was the first political base for David Ben-Gurion back in the '30s. And ever since it has been most intimately associated with Israel's now struggling Labor party.

"Striving toward Jewish-Arab co-existence in Israel, with the purpose of improving the understanding between the two nations and their cultures, Arabs in Israel is meant to bring the subject of co-existence closer to the international community of researchers and policy-makers."

"The publication is of an informative nature," so the Institute says about its new venture, "meant to supply current information about the Arab population in Israel and bilateral relations with the Jewish population. The information included in Arabs in Israel comes mainly from the daily Arab press, as well as the dailies published in Israel and East Jerusalem."

But there are a few telling signs that should make one suspicious.

First of all you might have thought such an Institute publishing such a publication would want an Arab editor. But no, that job has gone to Yitzhak Reiter. Or maybe it would want an Arab address, possibly in East Jerusalem for instance where most of the Arab publications being used as resource material are published. But no, the address is Tel Aviv — a P.O. Box (though one might not be surprised if the editorial offices are at The Histadrut).

How about an Editorial Board that brings Jews and Arabs together? Well, no, not quite. There is one apparent Arab name on the list of 5 Editorial Board members...an unknown person by the name of Sofian Kabaha.

Meanwhile, the current issue of the publication features a story — without dissenting comment — about how at a recent convention of some 400 peace

this group is that "it is incumbent upon us to continue the struggle for the protection of human rights; and to guarantee that Israel stands out as a bastion of decency in a region of the world that is sadly filled with hostility."

Rabbi Forman was recently on a speaking trip in the U.S. sponsored by The New Israel Fund — itself an American foundation set up by liberal American Jews to support such causes (and incidentally to not support far more important ones).

As a result of this visit, Forman was encouraged to start still another English-language newsletter.

"It is important that both Jews and non-Jews hear of the work of those in Israel who strive to maintain the democratic and Jewish character of the State," Forman notes in a tear-jerking "Letter To Our Supporters" that appears on page 3 of the newsletter's first edition. Appropriately, in this context, the title of the lead editorial is "Giving Judaism Another Face."

In recent weeks, partly for propaganda purposes and partly for fund-raising, both The Institute for Arab-Jewish Affairs and Rabbis for Human Rights have undertaken a direct-mail campaign. Various mailing lists were purchased, including that of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA).

It's all part of the ongoing efforts to give all of Israel's supporters, even the critics, something to read, something to believe in, something to give their money to.

And it's all part of an overall strategy to keep the big and basic questions out of the public domain by diverting everyone's attention and money to these marginal, and in many cases duplicitous, efforts.

Mark A. Bruzonsky's weekly syndicated column "From Washington" appears in a number of newspapers in the Middle East and in The Arab American News in the United States. The author can be reached at (202) 362-6033, by fax to (202) 362-6965, or on M/I Mail at MAB.

(313) 891-1600



Pacific

Allen Mallads
Proudly Presents
The **Rageb Alame** Concert
and
Comedian **Elias Ayoub**

باسيفيك كافيه

يفتخر بتقديم

الفنان رائع علامة

بالاشتراك مع الكوميدي
اييلي ايوب

في ٣١ ايار
قربان.
جى الحجز مسبقاً.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday