

From



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IN a sense the multi-faceted and confusing "peace movement" in Israel has got a bad name. Unfortunately, deservedly so.

Usually, those in Europe, the US, or, the Arab world who think about Israel's "peace movement" focus on such organisations as Peace Now, such personalities as Abba Eban and Yossi Sarid, and such institutions as *New Outlook* magazine its associated research centre The International Centre For Peace In The Middle East (ICPME), and the Centre's affiliated group in the US whose best-known personality is Rita Houser.

And so no wonder — especially for the most knowledgeable and enlightened — Israel's "peace movement" has a bad name; a name very often associated with hypocrisy, inconsistency, national chauvinism, and repeated attempts to trick and cajole the Palestinians into some kind of self-serving elections or worse yet "autonomy."

These groups and personalities may be well-known, but they are politically duplicitous, terribly self-centred, and almost always extremely opportunistic. Furthermore, in all cases mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the hand and money of Israel's schizophrenic and quite untrustworthy Labour Party can be detected with just a bit of effort.

But worst of all, these better-known groups and personalities are not really Israel's "peace movement" after all. Yet by co-opting the word "peace" and grabbing attention to themselves they create a situation where the serious peace groups have all the more difficulty rallying allies and supporters to their side.

Furthermore, in many cases, these better-known groups and personalities are actually part of a long-planned Israeli establishment conspiracy to co-opt the term "peace" and push those truly advocating a real and honest peace with the Palestinians off to the radical fringe.

For example, just a few months ago — after self-servingly selling his own magazine *Ha'olam Hazeh* to those on the Israeli right-wing — long-time peace activist Uri Avneri finally wrote an article

in which he revealed that the Israeli Foreign Ministry was long associated with funding and promoting *New Outlook* magazine, and that the "International Centre enjoys the secret support of Labour Party financing funds and ... is considered as one of the party's institutions."

But further buried within Israeli society — and lacking either the resources or the self-promotion style and instincts needed to push themselves forward into greater international view — there are very serious personalities and very honest organisations that deserve far more attention and support.

The most important such group that I have come across brings together major Israeli personalities, as well as major Palestinians some who have Israeli citizenship and others who live in the occupied territories, into a single organisation known by this very long-winded name: "The Israeli and Palestinian Writers, Artists and Academics Committee Against Occupation and for Peace and the Freedom to Create."

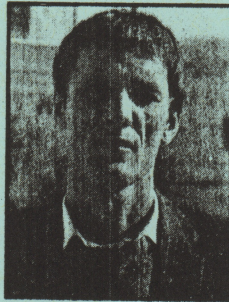
With a name like this clearly these are people not very attuned to public relations or sloganeering of any kind!

But what these Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs really are very dedicated and very courageous peace pioneers.

Emile Habibi, the well-known Palestinian writer and former editor of *Al-Itihad*, and actor Mohamed Bakry are two of the most important Arab personalities who lead this group.

Among the Jews, some of them are in Israeli prisons for doing such dastardly things as meeting with persons in the PLO to talk about how to bring about real peace. Some of them have given up important positions within the Israeli

Palestinians-Israelis join hands to fight for mutual dignity



Mohammad Bakry

establishment to stand up for their convictions. And some of them have been attacked, had their homes or cars fire-bombed, and/or had their lives threatened.

Novelist and columnist Amos Kenan and poet Natan Zach are among the best-known Israeli Jewish personalities heading this organisation.

One of Kenan's best-known novels, *The Road to Ein Harod* which was recently made into a movie, depicts a futuristic fascist take-over of Israel and a government that begins hunting down not only Arabs but Jewish sympathisers (like himself).

And three years ago Zach created a tremendous scandal in Israel when as head of Israel's delegation to an international poetry festival he withdrew indicating he would no longer represent Israel because for him Israel had lost its legitimacy by its treatment of the Palestinians. As one indication of Zach's stature, the others on the delegation then refused to attend as well.

Once one leaves Israeli shores one doesn't hear very much about this very important group of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs who have joined hands to fight for mutual dignity and mutual national independence. Their

writings, newspaper ads, and political work is primarily in Hebrew, and they lack even the funds to provide translation or to hire a secretary to mail or fax news of their efforts abroad.

Nevertheless, if I were to focus on one single group of courageous and principled persons who truly deserve the label "peace movement" and who actually are deserving of a "Nobel peace prize" this is the group I would nominate.

Just a few years ago, shortly after the Intifada restirred the passions and spirit of everyone who cares about justice and peace, an "Israeli-Palestinian Peace Treaty" was signed.

This group of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs was the inspiration for this "Treaty" and it has remained their primary statement of aspirations.

At this time of growing despair and possibly impending war maybe its a good idea to recall efforts of this kind, to look more deeply at who is really deserving of being called "the peace movement," and to rethink who is really deserving of our help and support.

Here is an English translation of the peace treaty initiated by "The Israeli and Palestinian Writers, Artists and Academics Committee Against Occupation and for Peace and the Freedom to Create":

An Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty

We the undersigned, Jewish and Arab writers, artists and academics in the State of Israel and Palestinians in the occupied territories, hereby accept and adopt the following peace treaty between the State of Israel and that of Falastin, the principles of which are as follows:

•The creation of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State in all the territories occu-

ped by Israel since the War of 1967 in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

•The sovereign Palestinian State acknowledges and recognises the right of the State of Israel to live in peace and security within its borders proceeding June 5, 1967. Concurrently, the State of Israel acknowledges and recognises the right of the Palestinian State of Falastin to live in peace and security within its own borders.

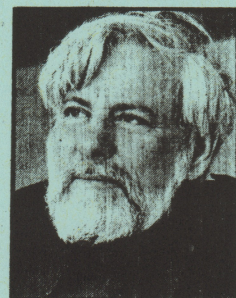
•The two sovereign States, Israel and Falastin, will sign a peace treaty and a non-aggression accord between themselves. Proper international guarantees will be required to ensure the sovereignty and peaceful existence of the two States within their recognised borders.

•A demilitarised Jerusalem with open borders, in which citizens of both States live side by side in peace, is the capital of the State of Israel as well as the Capital of the sovereign Palestinian State of Falastin.

•A just solution will be found to the refugee problem within the framework of the peace treaty.

•All the stages, processes and procedures leading to the creation of the State of Falastin will take place under international supervision.

We hereby call upon the government of the State of Israel to enter immediately into negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation with the intent of realising the above-outlined peace treaty within the framework of an international conference or any other framework acceptable to both parties involved. All the parties involved undertake to cease all acts of violence against each other immediately upon the beginning of the peace negotiations.



Uri Avneri

Palestinian-Arabs and Israeli Jews have joined hands to fight for mutual dignity and mutual national independence. Their writings, newspaper ads, and political work is primarily in Hebrew. The group is known as: The Israeli and Palestinian Writers, Artists and Academics Committee Against Occupation and for Peace and the Freedom to Create

Rawandan rebellion