

## **The Peace Movement in Israel: Reflections on Why Peacemakers Do Not Necessarily Make Peace**

by  
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### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite the resurgence, in Canada and elsewhere, of peace activism, myriad wars rage on. Arguably, these conflicts threaten human survival more than does the general danger of nuclear war. Yet, for all its vigour, the peace movement has focused more on the urgent need to prevent nuclear war and virtually ignored the actuality of war. Neither has it identified with efforts to end the various regional conflicts.

This paper directs attention to one regional conflict and to efforts to bring the conflict to an end. The Arab-Israeli conflict, and more specifically the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, has continued for almost forty years. It is the most serious ongoing conflict, especially because it is the one most likely to escalate to use of nuclear weapons and to involve both superpowers. In this context, one so deadly and devoid of prospect for resolution, at least since the hopes generated by the Camp David accords began to fade into memory, it often surprises people to learn that there is a remarkable peace movement in Israel. Many groups sprang up after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June 1982, but others, including such relatively well-known organizations as *New Outlook*, *Peace Now*, the Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and *Oz ve Shalom*, have an earlier history of trying to end the conflict between Israel and its neighbors. A number of institutions contribute to the peace process through research, study and publication. These include the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace of Hebrew University, the Institute for Federal Studies, the Van Leer Foundation and the Ecumenical Institute Academy for Peace (all in Jerusalem), the Centre for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv, and the Society for Middle East Confederation in Haifa.

Among interested outsiders, the peace movement in Israel has acquired a reputation for vitality and success. Is such reputation warranted? The question arises from an issue with which the peace movement in Israel is itself wrestling. With so much activity before, during and after the Lebanon war, why did the peace movement in Israel fail to prevent the invasion of Lebanon and, once the war began, to bring it to speedy conclusion? The question is of wider importance. For everyone concerned about war and peace, there is a need to reflect on why peacemakers do not necessarily make peace.

### **THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL**

First, there is a need to delimit and define "the peace movement in Israel." Using the phrase very loosely, it describes heterogeneous groupings of individuals and over thirty organizations with very different political programs, methods of operation, size, constituency and so on.<sup>1</sup>

Each has its own special role in the Israeli context. In varying degrees each seeks some comprehensive peace settlement which ensures the rights and security of both Jews and Palestinians. This broad definition implies activity to reconcile Jews and Palestinians and thus removes from consideration some groups which might claim to be concerned with peace. Thus groups such as Gush Emunim, which seeks to impose its agenda for "greater Israel" upon the Palestinian people, and some religious "fundamentalist" groups can be excluded.

To an extent the peace movement can be viewed as a counter-movement reacting to the growing political strength of Israel's ideological right.<sup>2</sup> However, the peace movement in Israel inherits an interpretation of the function of Zionism divergent from that which prevailed among Jews, especially in the Yishuv (as the Jewish community in Palestine was called), before 1948. The dominant view regarded Jewish and Arab claims to Palestine as irreconcilable. The ascendance of Nazi Germany heightened the conviction that a Jewish state had to be created. A vigorous minority regarded the question of Arab-Jewish cooperation as one which could not be ignored. Like religious Jews who opposed Zionism as betrayal of Torah, and imbued as well with western humanism, some key intellectuals formed a society in 1925, *Brit Shalom* (Covenant of Peace), to promote Jewish-Arab friendship. In 1942 another association, *Ihud* (Union), organized to advocate a bi-national Palestine. Diverse persons, largely educators and including Martin Buber (1878-1965), Hans Kohn (1891-1971), Judah Magnes (1877-1948) and Joseph Schecter (1901- ), called for peaceful co-existence with Arabs. Some anticipated an argument, which continues to be debated, that creation of a Jewish state represented an unacceptable version of settler colonialism. In the case of Schecter, a high school principal in Haifa, the model of *interfaith* community which continues to inspire some peace workers found expression in a settlement called Amana which attempted to deepen members' relationship with God.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the ideological background of the peace movement in Israel, it is now an extremely diverse phenomenon. To picture what is happening it is useful to distinguish at least four categories of peace groups in Israel: Arab-Jewish friendship groups, groups which seek to mobilize public opinion, groups which operate in the political arena, and, finally, the groups mentioned above which emphasize peace research, education and publication. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and each displays particular strengths and weaknesses which will be assessed later.

First, groups accenting Arab-Jewish friendship are considered. These operate entirely within the context of Israel's pre-1967 borders. One in every six of Israel's citizens is Arab. Although the State of Israel has no formal constitution and is a secular, democratic entity, it functions as a Jewish state building up a Jewish society. This fact has made it very difficult for most Israeli Jews to accept Israel's Arab minority or to overcome negative stereotypes of Arabs. The reverse is also true. Over the years the material situation for Israeli Arabs has improved, but their status remains second-class as measured by such indices as representation

in the Knesset, education, employment, and life expectancy.<sup>4</sup> More serious, however, is the fact that Israeli Jews and Arabs live in two separate worlds in which distrust and fear of each other prevail.

As many as twenty groups seek to overcome barriers which separate Jews and Arabs. The following three examples arise from perceived needs in the areas of language, religion and development. As a matter of practical necessity, Israeli Arabs learn Hebrew. However, their use of Hebrew is restricted to certain arenas of interaction (such as markets and government offices) which reinforce second-class status.<sup>5</sup> For their part, Jews, though the majority of them learned Arabic, often as their first language, tend to disdain speaking Arabic. One effort to deal with this problem is the Jerusalem Centre for Arab-Jewish Dialogue which came into being after the reunification of the city in 1967. The Centre has as its immediate objective facilitating language instruction for Arabs and Jews, but it has a more profound goal, fostering mutual respect between Arabs and Jews. According to Kalmon Yaron, educator and 1980 recipient of the *New Outlook* Peace Prize,<sup>6</sup> the thought of Martin Buber animates the Centre. Buber taught that all real life is encounter, and that Arab-Jewish understanding would come about by uprooting prejudice and dispelling myths about both peoples. Accordingly the Centre emphasizes dialogue by pairing off Arab and Jewish students for discussion, parties, tours and the like. Over 6,000 people have participated in courses since the program's inception sixteen years ago.

Religious understanding undergirds the dream of *Neve Shalom*, which is Hebrew for Oasis of Peace (from Isaiah 32:18). *Neve Shalom* is an inter-religious settlement located at Latrun just off the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. Established in 1970 by Father Bruno Hussar (1911- ), a Dominican priest and another 1980 peace prize winner,<sup>7</sup> *Neve Shalom* seeks to unite Christians, Muslims and Jews. Families (three Jewish, two Muslim, one mixed, as well as several single persons and volunteers from all three faith traditions) live and work in community. Although one hope — greater common worship — has not materialized, *Neve Shalom* is unique in enabling people to transcend religious barriers and to function on a basis of genuine equality. Moreover, *Neve Shalom* houses a peace group network (*Reshet*) and, with yet another group, Partnership, a School of Peace, sponsors camps bringing together 5,000 Jewish and Arab children a year.

A third example of groups seeking to improve Arab-Jewish relations is Interns for Peace.<sup>8</sup> Bruce Cohen, a reform rabbi from the United States, conceived the idea after the first Land Day (March 30, 1976) demonstrations resulted in the death of six Israeli Arabs. Cohen wanted to avoid what he perceived to be a fundamental weakness of Arab-Jewish friendship groups. He describes this weakness to be a "let's get together syndrome" consisting of small-talk over tea or coffee. Cohen moved to train volunteers who are then assigned for two years to work in neighboring Arab and Jewish communities. On a reciprocal basis involving both towns, Interns undertake social and cultural exchanges, health care and industrial development projects and educational activity. To date they have completed over thirty-five projects, and graduates from the

program have gone on to find employment with groups such as the Jerusalem-based Arab-Jewish Institute for Coexistence and Israel Inter-faith Committee.

The Arab-Jewish friendship groups contribute to the peace movement primarily in the realm of human understanding. They want to eschew politics (which is very nearly impossible in the Israeli context) and seek to achieve mutual recognition of the rights and dignity of two peoples who otherwise have very little meaningful contact with each other. It might be noted that analogous groups within Canada's peace movement similarly emphasize human values by promoting cultural, commercial, educational and religious exchanges. Examples include the Canadian Conference on Religion and Peace, which sponsors interfaith religious services, and the mundialization movement, which twins Canadian cities with cities elsewhere.

Second, there are the groups seeking to mobilize Israeli public opinion more immediately around the actuality of war and its prevention. In the introduction four older efforts were mentioned in this category: *New Outlook*, Peace Now, the Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and *Oz ve Shalom*. In addition to describing the work of these four, groups can be identified which have gained prominence since the Lebanon War, including *Netivot Shalom* and *Yesh Gvul*.

The earliest of these had its origins in efforts, similar to those discussed above, to promote Arab-Jewish friendship. Unease because of Israel's identification with English and French neo-colonialism during the 1956 Sinai campaign led a small group, generally from the socialist kibbutzes, to discuss ways to open dialogue with Arabs. Under the leadership of Simha Flapham, Haim Darin-Drabkin (1908-1979) and others, a journal, *New Outlook*, was launched with the objective of serving "as a medium for the clarification of problems concerning peace and cooperation among all the peoples of the Middle East." A glance at the titles of articles in the first issue reveals the orientation of the journal throughout its twenty-seven year history: "On Israeli-Arab Relations" (by Albert Einstein); "Hands Proffered in Friendship" (by Nahum Goldmann); "The Arab Minority in Israel"; "Planning a Modern Arab Village"; "Israeli Foreign Policy"; and "Developments in Jordan." As well, the *New Outlook* leadership has initiated a number of peace proposals and participated in symposia and dialogues. Some of these have aroused considerable controversy. For example, in 1967 several members of the editorial board called for the creation of a Palestinian state including the West Bank and Gaza, perhaps federated with both Israel and Jordan. This proposal continues to have considerable support both within the Israeli peace movement, and among Palestinians.<sup>10</sup> In 1970 *New Outlook* encouraged Nahum Goldmann (1885-1982, a past President of the World Jewish Congress) to accept an apparent invitation to meet with Egyptian President Nasser. Although the meeting did not take place, the so-called Goldmann affair enhanced the credibility of the peace movement in its opposition to official Israeli policies.<sup>11</sup> In 1978 *New Outlook* initiated what has become a regular series of face-to-face meetings between Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>12</sup>

In 1982 *New Outlook* launched a new undertaking, an International Centre for Peace in the Middle East. Its purpose is the achievement of the following:

- 1) comprehensive peace in the Middle East;
- 2) full solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by mutual recognition, self-determination and co-existence;
- 3) extrication of the Middle East from super-power rivalries and the arms race, nuclear and conventional;
- 4) cooperation between the Jewish people and the Arab world with freedom of conscience and religious tolerance;
- 5) equality of social, cultural and political rights for religious and national minorities; and,
- 6) regional cooperation aimed at developing the area for the benefit of all its peoples.

To these ends the centre publishes translations from the Hebrew and Arab press, sponsors research and holds high-profile conferences. Although these are not new techniques, there does seem to be an intensification of activity intended to make the peace process even more central to political debate among world Jewry than has previously been the case.<sup>13</sup>

*New Outlook* and the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East cultivate an elite constituency largely among English-speaking Jews outside Israel. By contrast, *Shalom achav* (Peace Now) has sought to mobilize grass-roots Israeli opinion. After 1977 as the hopes raised by President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem began to fade, and when Prime Minister Begin intensified Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, 350 reserve officers and soldiers wrote to Begin. Their letter stated in part, "A government that will prefer the existence of Israel in borders of the greater Israel to its existence in peace in the context of good neighbourly relations will arouse in us grave misgivings. A government that will prefer the establishment of settlements across the 'green line' to the ending of the historic conflict and to the establishment of a system of normal relations will raise questions about the justice of our course."<sup>14</sup>

From these beginnings, Peace Now has grown into Israel's largest peace group. In the months before the Lebanon War, Peace Now opposed the drift to war by organizing demonstrations, issuing statements and lobbying. On July 3, 1982, during the Lebanon War, it called for a rally in Tel Aviv to protest the war and its aims. An estimated 80,000-100,000 people responded. Even greater numbers gathered in the wake of the Sabra-Shatilla massacre, with the result that the government appointed the commission of inquiry headed by Supreme Court President Yitzhak Kahan. Subsequent marches and rallies have mobilized opinion after the Kahan commission completed its work, on the first and second anniversaries of the Lebanon invasion, and protested new settlement activity in the occupied territories. Initially very loosely organized, the peace movement generally, and Peace Now in particular, have become more structured. Peace Now has steering committees and regular meetings in Israel's major cities and kibbutzes. One criticism of Peace Now has been

the absence of significant support from Sephardic (Eastern) Jews. This led to the formation of a sister organization, *Hamizrach el Ha-shalom* (East for Peace) to encourage the peace process and deepen the involvement of Sephardic Jews in work for peace and tolerance.<sup>15</sup>

Within the Israeli context, Peace Now has chosen a moderate political platform which closely parallels that of the Labour Party led by Shimon Peres. On the whole, Peace Now has sought to extend its influence by organizing the political mainstream. More radical is the Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. According to Mattiyahu Peled, reserve general and member of the editorial board of the council's official publications, the council originated in 1975. A number of prominent Israelis responded to perceived signs of moderation within the Palestinian movement by issuing a twelve-point program. The most significant plank was its appeal for direct Israeli-Palestinian talks and recognition of the PLO as the national representative for the Palestinian people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the council's main role in the peace movement has been to meet with Yasser Arafat, the late Dr. Issam Sartawi, the deposed West Bank majors Fahd Kawasme and Mohammed Milhelm and other leading Palestinians. Like virtually all the groups mentioned here, the council has sought financial and other kinds of support outside Israel, especially in the United States where Jewish (to say nothing of non-Jewish) opinion tends to be highly uncritical of official policy.<sup>16</sup>

Two peace groups draw from yet another constituency, orthodox Judaism. *Oz ve Shalom* (Strength and Peace) was organized in 1975 by a number of observant Jews from the universities and religious kibbutz movement, while *Netivot Shalom* (Paths to Peace) has emerged since the Lebanon War within the *Yeshivot* (religious schools) which have hitherto been bastions of support for the ideological right. Unlike the groups under discussion whose proposals, arguments and methods of operation are in some sense secular and political, *Oz ve Shalom* and *Netivot Shalom* participate in a significant debate concerning *Jewish* values and the nature of a *Jewish* state. No religious Jew questions the bond of the Jewish people with the land of Israel. Without connection to the land of Israel, religious Judaism is virtually meaningless. But does this mean that the political entity, Israel, has a right to specific tracts of land? Yes, argues the religious right: "After all, the Land is the eternal possession of the Jewish People alone."<sup>17</sup> Yet, others, such as Joseph Soloveitchik, perhaps the most distinguished rabbi alive, observed in 1975 that the land is secondary to other values:

The Jewish law regarding the saving of lives must be taken into account when dealing with politics. There are now many who call for giving up not one inch of the Land of Israel, who do not feel that for intransigence we may pay a dear price in human lives .... In matters of territories, policies *and* saving lives the recognized experts are the army and the Israeli Government. If they find that it is possible to give up territories, without

endangering lives ... or the state's very existence then they must be followed.<sup>18</sup>

From a religious standpoint, so-called religious doves began to question how the people of Israel could fulfill its vocation to be a light unto the nations when the State of Israel so clearly ignored the central values emanating from the law and prophets: the notion of life as the creation of God, the sanctity of the name of God, justice and peace. Jacob Talmon, distinguished historian, observed: "World opinion that watched our national endeavor with sympathy and came to our aid would shake its head and ask, 'Is this that Jerusalem that was built on righteousness?'"<sup>19</sup>

With this question in mind, *Oz ve Shalom* and *Netivot Shalom* rejected both the Lebanon War and creeping annexation of the occupied territories as part of a "new idolatry" and religious "heresy" distorting Jewish values and undermining universal human rights and respect for human life. According to Rabbi Lichtenstein, son-in-law of Joseph Soloveitchik and leader in the Etzion settlement outside Hebron, "It is time to make clear that there is another opinion in the religious Zionist camp. In the present situation, realistic thinking has gone by the board and any deviation from the accepted norm has become suspect and dangerous."

It is significant that the passage from Deuteronomy (21: 6-7) cited by the Kahan Commission of Inquiry Report was first used during a prayer vigil sponsored by the religious movement for peace during the somber days immediately after the Beirut massacre. Unlike those in the religious establishment who hastened to defend the so-called "peace for Galilee" campaign and to denounce world reaction to the massacre as anti-semitic, the religious doves raised searching questions about the state of the health of religion in the State of Israel. Peering into the abyss, they found both religion and state wanting.<sup>20</sup>

The final group in this category, *Yesh Gvul* (There is a limit), illustrates the rise of selective conscientious objection, a phenomenon almost unique in Israel's history.<sup>21</sup> The immediate context for the organization of *Yesh Gvul* was growing opposition in Israel generally, and specifically within the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), to the war in Lebanon. Initially, a degree of national consensus supported the stated war aims of the campaign launched by Israel on June 6, 1982. These involved the creation of a 45-kilometre cordon sanitaire along Israel's border with Lebanon, destruction of the military-political infrastructure of the Palestine Liberation Organization in southern Lebanon, and the establishment of conditions whereby a new Lebanese government might follow Egypt's lead in signing a treaty with Israel. When the IDF continued beyond the Awali River to Beirut, Israelis began to demonstrate against the war under the banner of, first, "The Committee against the War in Lebanon," then "Peace Now" and finally new groups including *Netivot Shalom*, "Parents against Silence" and *Yesh Gvul*.

In July 1982 Colonel Eli Geva, commander of an armoured brigade which was among the first to reach Beirut, asked to be relieved of his command but to remain as an ordinary soldier. The IDF dismissed Geva

who immediately became a symbol for the peace movement. His action sparked a heated debate, not only about the war, but also about the occupied territories, and the creation of *Yesh Gvul*. A loosely structured organization, *Yesh Gvul* concentrates on gathering signatures for a petition objecting to military service in Lebanon and the occupied territories. To date several thousand reservists have signed, and over a hundred have served in prison.<sup>22</sup>

It was anticipated that the elections, scheduled for July 23, 1984, would provide a measure by which to gauge the effectiveness of the peace movement in mobilizing Israeli public opinion. Although the war in Lebanon and future of the occupied territories were not the only issues of the campaign, they were major issues. Both major parties, Likud and Labour (especially the left wing mapem group), claimed to be peace parties. As well as at least three smaller parties have platforms which reflect more adequately the programs of the groups we have been discussing. It should be noted that Israel's electoral process, which awards seats in the Knesset on the basis of the percentage of the total vote achieved, favors such smaller parties.

One is *Sheli*, the Israel Peace and Equality Movement. In 1977 *Sheli* brought together a number of groups which support the establishment of a Palestinian State in the occupied territories. In the May 1977 elections *Sheli* won two seats, but it lost these in 1981 as a result of the growing polarization of Israeli society and internal factionalism. One faction has now formed another party, called Members of Alternative, headed by Mattiyahu Peled and journalist Uri Avnery.

Yet another party siphoned off some of *Sheli's* support in 1981. This was the *Ratz* or Citizens Rights party headed by Shulamit Aloni, MK, and Mordechai Bar-On of Peace Now. Meron Benveniste, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, is also involved in the party and has recently published findings of a West Bank data-base project. His conclusion, that annexation of the occupied territories is a *de facto* reality, has generated intense debate and confusion within the peace movement concerning strategies and political platform.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, reference should be made to *Rakah*, the Communist Party, and several Marxist factions. These parties have traditionally (but not in 1981) won a few seats in the Knesset under a united Arab list by mobilizing support from Israel's Arab population and the non-Zionist or anti-Zionist Jewish left. Recently, Arab political activists have tended to gravitate towards the Labour party, but this, too, is subject to intense debate.<sup>24</sup>

In the introduction to this paper, it was noted that a number of institutions seek to contribute to the peace process through research, study and publication. These institutions differ from peace studies activity elsewhere in that they focus almost exclusively upon the Middle East. The only exception is the Interfaith Academy for Peace, inaugurated on December 15, 1983 and housed at the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies (Tantur). Tantur originated during Pope Paul VI's pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1964, and it now seeks to deepen its



impact by drawing together religious leaders from many traditions in a common search for religious reconciliation and world peace.<sup>25</sup>

The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, founded in 1966 and housed at the Mt. Scopus campus of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, conducts seminars and sponsors social science and historical research on non-western countries, with emphasis on the Middle East. Over thirty scholars are affiliated with the Truman Institute, which also provides facilities for numerous visiting scholars each year. Along with a sister body, the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, the Truman Institute oversees the editing of articles and books by its researchers. Yet another Jerusalem-based research centre, the Institute for Federal Studies, and the Centre for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv facilitate research on issues related to peace in the Middle East.

The Jerusalem-based Van Leer Foundation has a similar mandate to conduct seminars and sponsor research in areas related to peace, but its work has a more practical intervention focus. For example, recent projects have sought to identify and correct problems related to Israel's Arab minority, including inadequate technical education opportunities in the Arab sector, stereotyping of Arabs in the television medium and need for new curriculum materials dealing with relations between Arabs and Jews. The latter project, initiated by former intelligence officer Alouph Hareven, has the cooperation of Israel's Ministry of Education. A textbook, entitled *To Live Together*, has been introduced on a trial basis in both Hebrew and Arabic. The material emphasizes mutual respect through learning each other's language and offers exercises intended to reduce prejudice and intolerance by Israel's Arabs and Jews towards the respective communities.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the Society for Middle East Confederation, based in Haifa, was created in 1971 as a forum for the discussion of proposals aimed at solving the Middle East conflict through some economic and political union involving Arabs and Jews. Ideas range from the Benelux model of economic cooperation to a political federation of equal states encompassing the geopolitical area on both sides of the Jordan River. The present chairperson is Ibrahim Sim'an, an Arab Christian and Baptist minister. Its secretary is Joseph Abileah, an Austrian-born Jew who came to Palestine in 1926. Since the Lebanon war Sim'an has been especially active in relief work, while Abileah is a pacifist with an international reputation for courageous and bold advocacy of peace with justice in the region.<sup>27</sup>

Thus far the author's task has been largely descriptive, namely to identify over thirty organizations which by no means exhaust the scope of the peace movement in Israel. Many additional groups operate within the framework of the four categories identified, while others have yet another function. For example, four important groups focus on human rights violation. These are the Jerusalem-based Association for Civil Rights in Israel and Israel League for Human and Civil Rights, Law in the Service of Man, an affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists based in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, and the Committee of Solidarity for Bir Zeit, composed largely of Israeli academics

concerned about the situation of the West Bank universities. As well, this article has centred on the situation in Israel proper, resulting in a significant omission of effort by Palestinians in the occupied territories. Finally, although not mentioned, there are many remarkable individuals who contribute significantly to the peace movement. Such persons include Elias Chacour, a Greek Catholic priest who has organized non-violent demonstrations among Arab villagers in the northern Galilee, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, brilliant scholar and outspoken critic of the Israeli government, and Ruth Lys of Haifa, *New Outlook* peace prize winner recognized for her work among Arab and Jewish women.

## EVALUATION

These descriptive efforts reveal both the profound concern by Israelis over the cycle of war in the region, and the determination of many to find a way to peace based on reconciliation among Arabs and Jews. The peace movement in Israel may claim success in at least two important areas. It has helped to improve materially the situation of Israel's Arab citizens, and it has played a role in the aftermath of the invasion of Lebanon by calling for a commission of inquiry into the Sabra-Shatilla massacre and for withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanon. Recognition of the vitality, diversity and even success of the peace movement in Israel should not lead one to conclude that its objectives are being realized, or that peace in the region is at hand. Realistically, one must acknowledge that the peace movement in Israel has not provided a program likely to be implemented by any government formed after the July 1984 elections. The peace movement is internally divided and subject to criticism approaching, at times, contempt by other elements in Israeli society. Within the movement some have started to wrestle with the painful question with which this article opened: why did the peace movement fail to prevent the invasion of Lebanon and, once the war began, to bring it to speedy conclusion? Briefly, an evaluation of the movement and a reflection regarding why peacemakers do not necessarily make peace may provide some indications.

Earlier two criticisms of the peace movement in Israel were noted, namely that it is dominated by Western Jews and that its activities, especially in the Arab-Jewish friendship groups, involve only tea, coffee and conversation. To an extent these criticisms are valid and interrelated. Jews who emigrated from Canada, England and the United States after the 1967 war are prominent in many of the groups under discussion. They are convinced that the very existence of the State of Israel is at stake, and that Western democratic liberalism offers models applicable to the Middle East. Certainly their background — for some, the experience of changing patterns of black-white relations in the United States, or minority-majority relations elsewhere — is alien to that of many Sephardic Jews and Arabs. They are perceived as outsiders, and Arabs especially dismiss their agenda as irrelevant to real issues of peace in the region.

The first criticism is not entirely fair. Sephardic Jews have never been absent from the peace movement. Some (for example, the late Elie

Eliachar) have contributed significantly to it,<sup>28</sup> and there is evidence of increased involvement by Sephardic Jews. More problematic is the fact that many of the groups have substantial backing (including financial support) in the West. For many Westerners, Jews and non-Jews alike, groups like Peace Now, Interns for Peace, Partnership, and the Inter-faith Committee represent the kind of Israel they would like to see: intelligent, tolerant, willing to compromise. Through their encouragement of these groups, outsiders may do the groups and the cause of peace generally a disservice by imparting a false sense of importance and encouraging the *status quo*.<sup>29</sup>

The second criticism is serious. Arabs are naturally impatient with groups which offer friendship but whose platforms do not challenge Zionist ideology. They are suspicious of the source (especially if from American Jews) of funding for groups and of possible infiltration of the groups by Israeli intelligence. Finally, they are susceptible to charges from within their own communities of collaboration with "the enemy" or, in the case of Israeli Arabs, of breaking solidarity with those in the occupied territories or in diaspora. In consequence, Arabs who participate — and relatively few do — in the myriad peace groups are motivated to join for different reasons than are Jews, and the relationships tend not to be equal or symmetrical.

There is a more immediate problem confronting the peace movement in Israel. It shares no common vision for the future or platform acceptable to any future Israeli government, or, for that matter, to any Palestinian or Arab negotiating partner. Palestinians, especially, reject supposed peacemakers who ignore what they deem central, including creation of some kind of Palestinian homeland, a mechanism by which Palestinians in diaspora might return home or receive just compensation for their land, and internationalization in some form of the status of Jerusalem. To many radical Jewish *and* Arab critics in Israel or abroad, Labour and Likud differ only in tone, not substance. In effect, former Prime Minister Begin's stated policy of "creating facts" in the occupied territories has succeeded, and no consensus exists in the peace movement as to what to do about this reality.

There is yet another issue that one ventures only hesitantly to raise. The question of the future of the State of Israel and of the future of the Palestinians is obviously one of great importance. Unless it is resolved, with proximate justice for all, there will be no peace in the region, and very possibly no future for the human race. Moreover, the twin traumas of the holocaust and of the mass exodus of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and 1967 are so immediate, so haunting and so overwhelming that the human dimensions of the conflict cannot be overstated. Yet it is possible to exaggerate the difficulties, to overstate the complexity and to lose perspective. In peace movements generally talk of peace becomes almost wearisome. Certainly the situation is no different in Israel, where virtually everybody participates in an intense process of self-questioning. The danger is that in planning, researching, acting, mobilizing, there is no place for celebration of some accomplishments. These are dangers from

which the peace movement in Israel is not immune, and to which concerned outsiders may contribute, at least in part, by asking questions, offering friendship and participating in the debate with a different set of assumptions than those which arise locally.

There are other problems as well. The ideological right has effectively identified its symbol, the symbol of the land (*eretz* Israel) with the security of Jews and of the State of Israel. By contrast, the peace movement has not succeeded in providing a symbol capable of rallying public opinion or convincing Israelis that continued failure to resolve the Palestinian problem has anything to do with their own security and human dignity. As a result, peace activists have been vulnerable to the charge that they are traitors or, at best, naïve. Nor has the peace movement persuaded Israelis that their economic woes, which are real enough, have anything to do with the continued presence of Israeli forces in Lebanon and the occupied territories.

In evaluating the limitations of the peace movement in Israel one begins to identify possible reasons why the peacemakers have not necessarily made peace there. Of course the reasons are much more profound than those which have been cited, but it is useful to note the limitations of the situation. Those involved in the peace movement in Canada may note these areas as warning signals, particularly the suggestion that peacemakers fail to make peace if they are seen as not adequately bridging divisions within the given society. They must overcome religious, ethnic, sexist and ideological division. They fail if they focus too narrowly on the agenda of one party in a dispute to the exclusion of the concerns of the other party. They fail if they focus too narrowly on war (for example, the war in Lebanon) and ignore the broader dimensions of conflict, including conditions for the creation of a just society. And, finally, they fail if they lose hope, the capacity to celebrate or determination.

Still, in the final analysis, the peacemakers in Israel have not failed. They have made important strides forward in key areas of the conflict. One source of light in a situation that often appears very dark is that the peacemakers in Israel have not betrayed the vision of peace which animates all peoples everywhere. There is a wonderful Talmudic story according to which our universe depends for its very existence upon the presence in it of thirty-six just persons. They are hidden and do not know themselves who they are. Yet without even one of them the universe itself would collapse.

## Author's Note

- \* Research for this paper was completed during a year's sabbatical from McMaster Divinity College. The paper was first read at the nineteenth annual conference of the Canadian Peace Research and Education Association, June 9, 1984.

## Footnotes

1. *New Outlook* 25, no. 7 (October 1982), p. 46, lists many groups with their addresses. Virtually every issue of the journal profiles the activities of specific groups.
2. Rael Jean Isaac, *Israel Divided, Ideological Politics in the Jewish State* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 73.
3. Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, ed., *A Land of Two Peoples. Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Herbert Weiner, *The Wild Goats of Ein Gedi. A Journal of Religious Encounters in the Holy Land* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), ch. 12. Interview with Joseph Emmanuel, March 21, 1983, for background on Amana. Emmanuel heads the Israel Interfaith Committee, work for which he received the 1981 *New Outlook* peace prize.
4. Alouph Hareven, ed., *Every Sixth Israeli. Relations between the Jewish Majority and the Arab Minority in Israel* (Jerusalem: Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation, 1983).
5. Gerald Caplan with Ruth B. Caplan, *Arab and Jew in Jerusalem. Explorations in Community Mental Health* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), esp. ch. 3-4.
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7. *New Outlook* 24, no. 2 (February/March 1981), pp. 44-45. Interview with Bruno Hussar, May 4, 1983. See his autobiography, *Quend la nuée se levait. Juiv, prêtre, Israélien: un itinéraire* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1983). Descriptions of *Neve Shalom* include Bruno Hussar, "Neve Shalom," *New Outlook* 24, no. 6 (July/August 1981), pp. 54-55; Jim Forest, "The Five Pebbles of David," *Fellowship* 40 (December 1974), pp. 16-17; *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, December 17, 1982, pp. 4-5; *Quaker Concern*, 8 (Summer 1982), p. 2.
8. *New Outlook* 24, no. 5 (June 1981), p. 46; *New Outlook* 24, no. 10 (January/February 1982), p. 62. Interview with Bruce Cohen, May 10, 1983. David K. Shipler, "In Israeli Village, Jews and Arabs Erase Stereotypes," *New York Times*, February 12, 1981, p. A2.
9. *New Outlook* 25, no. 8 (November/December 1982), p. 26.
10. *New Outlook* 10, no. 6 (July/August 1967), p. 57; reprinted in Isaac, pp. 173-174. Isaac argues (pp. 89ff) that the platform was original, but in fact a number of proposals for federalist solutions to the Arab-Jewish question had been made earlier. See the pamphlet *Confederation in the Middle East. Various Proposals* (Haifa: Society for Middle East Confederation, 1973).
11. Isaac, pp. 97-98. For Goldmann's last published statement, see "Where Is Israel Going?," trans. Gitta Honegger, *New York Review of Books* 29/15 (October 7, 1982), pp. 16-18.
12. Published as *When Enemies Dare to Talk. An Israeli-Palestinian Debate*, ed. Simha Flapan (London: Croom Helm, 1979).
13. Nomi Sharron, "The Search for Peace," *Jerusalem Post*, February 1, 1983; *New Outlook* 25, no. 2 (March 1982), pp. 36-38.
14. Pamphlet, *Peace Now*, October 1982.
15. Daniel Gavron, "Winds of Change from the East," *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, July 17-23, 1983; Shelly Elkayam, "I Am Your Sister," *New Outlook* 27, no. 3-4 (March/April 1984), pp. 34-35. For criticism of Peace Now's failure to enlist Sephardic support, articles by Paul Quiring, "Peace Now's Role in Israel," *Christian Century*, October 11, 1978, pp. 955-956; Henry Rosenfeld, "A Challenge to Peace Now," *New Outlook* 27, no. 2 (February 1984), pp. 15-17; Susan Hattis Rolef, "The Limits of Peace Now," *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, March 25-31, 1984.
16. Interview with Mattiyahu Peled, May 20, 1983. Also, Robert Hirschfield, "General Peled, Israeli Dove," *Christian Century*, November 10, 1982, pp. 1124-1125; *New*

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17. Mordechai Nisan, writing in the *Jerusalem Post*, January 18, 1983.
  18. Writing in *Ma-ariv*, September 5, 1975, cited by David Bedein, "Genesis of an Israeli Religious Left," *New Outlook* 19, no. 1 (January 1976), p. 39.
  19. Cited by Isaac, p. 89.
  20. David Hartman, "A New Idolatry," *Jerusalem Post*, February 26, 1982. "Breath of Fresh Air," *Jerusalem Post* editorial, December 12, 1982. Interviews with David Hartman, January 21, 1983; Moshe Habertal of *Netivot Shalom*, February 25, 1983; Yehzekel Landau of *Oz ve Shalom*, May 3, 1983. For a brief description of *Oz ve Shalom*, *New Outlook* 25, no. 8 (November/December 1982), p. 53.
  21. For precedents, Martin Blett, Uri Davis and Paul Kleinbaum, eds., *Dissent and Ideology in Israel: Resistance to the Draft 1948-1973*, intro. Noam Chomsky (London: Ithaca Press, 1975). Also, in 1979 a group of young men and women wrote the Minister of Defense, Ezer Weizman, that when they were conscripted into the armed forces they would refuse to serve in the occupied territories. At least two spent several weeks in military jail. See "The Danny Amir Affair," *New Outlook* 23, no. 1 (February 1980), p. 41 and "Leibowitz on Civil Disobedience," *New Outlook* 23, no. 4 (May 1980), p. 37. Finally, three groups present a pacifist witness. The War Resisters International has a small section, and two historic peace churches, the Mennonites and Society of Friends, have a presence in Israel and the occupied territories.
  22. Daniel Gavron, "Clash of Symbols," *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, May 27, 1983 (summarizing Dov Irmiya's privately published book, *My War Diary*); Jacobo Timerman, *The Longest War* (London: Pan Books, Chatto and Windus, 1982); Lili Galilee, "Profile of a Lebanon War Resister," *Ha'aretz*, January 13, 1984, trans. *Israeleft*; Ravi Givoni, "A Parachutist's Letter: I Shall Fight No More," *Zu Haderech*, March 7, 1984, trans. Israel Shahak.
  23. Meron Benveniste, *The West Bank and Gaza Data Base Project. Interim Reports 1-3* (Jerusalem, 1982). I have not seen the final report, which is discussed in an article by Arie Dayan in *Koteret Rashit*, March 14, 1984, trans. Israel Shahak. Interview with Meron Benveniste February 13, 1983; Benveniste was interviewed on CBC Radio "As It Happens," April 10, 1984.
  24. "Impending Israeli Elections Stir Political Debate in the Galilee," *Al Fajr*, May 4, 1984.
  25. Landrum Bolling, "Peace Has to Become a High Priority Business for Us All," *New Outlook* 27, no. 3-4 (March/April 1984), p. 38.
  26. Alouf Hareven, Jaacob Freed, Asia Romberg, *To Live Together. A Textbook for High Schools Concerning Mutual Relations Between Jews and Arabs in Israel* (Jerusalem, 1982). Mr. Hareven kindly provided me a draft translation in English of the Hebrew-language materials.
  27. His story is told in the anthology edited by Blett, Davis and Kleinbaum, *Dissent and Ideology in Israel*; also, Jeffrey Elliot, "An Interview with Joseph Abileah," *Fellowship* 44, 1-2 (January/February 1978), pp. 13, 23. Interviews with Sim'an and Abileah, January 19, 1983.
  28. *New Outlook* 24, no. 9 (December 1981) has several articles on Sephardi and peace.
  29. This is the thrust of the article on "The Limits of Peace Now" by Susan Hattis Rolef (fn. 15 above).