

# LETTERS

*Mikado (M. Warshawski) a leading member of the MATZPEN-MARXISTI (Fourth International-Trotskyite) movement in Jerusalem, writes:*

I&P No.59 arrived here very late. I send this letter fast, so as to be able to react on your view of our relationship with the PLO.

About a year ago, I&P decided not to publish any viewpoint that does not enter the framework of accepting the State of Israel; or, rather, apparently accepting the State of Israel. It is its right, even if I feel this policy not to be too wise and rather counter-productive (as far as those objectives, which I&P declares are its own, are concerned. What I&P has no right to do, if it wishes to remain an honest publication, able to play even the most modest role, in the struggle for peace in Palestine, is to warp reality, either by not mentioning facts or by giving false ones.

It seems I&P has a pessimistic, not to say negative view of the anti-Zionist organizations' work in Israel. Even if one disagrees with such an estimate, it is impossible to deny that I&P has the right to its own positions. But if I&P also wishes to be a newsmagazine, it must inform its readers in the most open and objective manner so that they may draw their own conclusions and information. It seems that, of late, I&P filters news according to its view of the anti-Zionist forces in Israel. This creates a vicious circle: the anti-Zionist forces are an unimportant element in Israel, proof of which is that they do nothing and have no audience to speak of, but this "proof" itself is influenced by the theory which pushes I&P towards ignoring systematically all our activities and achievements.

I shall not speak lengthily giving examples; our press and the Zionist press give a rather complete picture of whatever I&P "keeps quiet about". Nothing on the role of the Revolutionary Communist League (Matzpen-Marxisti) in the solidarity campaign with the political prisoners of the Ashkelon jail (a role far more important than that of the Communist Party). Nothing on the press campaign launched against the RCL (MM) precisely because of its relations with the PLO. Nothing about the commission dealing with the right of our Comrade Leah Tsemel to represent soldiers and certain political prisoners. Nothing about our electoral

campaign, which is more important than the ones of various groups mentioned by I&P, and which was able to mobilize hundreds in meetings held among the Palestinian population, many more than SHELI mobilized. (This campaign succeeded, in the very end, in drawing many Arab political groups (Abna El Balad 'The Sons Of The Place' and the Unions of Arab Students) to call for abstaining from voting, and brought about something like 12,000 to 14,000 political abstentions as also Zionist specialists of the Arab population estimate).

Nothing, moreover, about our role in the 30th March 1977 demonstration between Sakhnin and Araba which we organized and which resulted in me being summoned to see the "Authorities" who did not hide their opinion that the RCL (MM) had started to become too active among the Arab population. In short, if we forget this and many other things, it is not surprising that the RCL (MM) and all of the anti-Zionist forces become unimportant elements. I forgot to mention the role of RCL (MM) forces in the Feminist movement which is about to become one of the most important and one of the biggest movements in the radicalized Jewish population.

This far-from-complete list proves, if proof were necessary, how false it is to say that for the RCL (MM) the Arab majority must do revolutionary work in our stead, or instead of the Jewish and Arab populations of Israel. Whether we deal with the trade union level of work, or that of the Feminist movement, of international solidarity or of the defense of Human Rights, of political work in Universities and in popular parts of the towns, the RCL maintains a politically active presence among the Jewish population which is not much less modest than that of the Communist Party and *Moked*, and certainly more than Haolam Hazeh or other moderate groups.

As to our presence, our activity and our support from the masses among the Arab population, ours is infinitely more considerable than those of all of the moderate Zionist groups and of all non Zionist groups except the Communist Party, of course. I will take the liberty of reminding you that on 1 May 1976, when the Zionist Left organized its main demonstration with less than

300 people attending, and while all of the Leftwing groups demonstrated together with the Communist Party (and I mean SHASSI, BRIT HASSMOL, AKI the BLACK PANTHERS) - mobilizing no more than one hundred (!) people, the bloc of the ISRAELI SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION and the RCL was able to gather more than 350 demonstrators, half of them Jewish and half of them Arab, many of which were workers. This is not surprising given a true evaluation of the real strength of all of the Israeli Left - including the Communist Party - among the Jewish population, on and above "personalities" and Reserve Army Generals. As for the Arab population, if the Zionists have no chance whatever of gathering any real strength there - as the last elections showed - the anti-Zionists can become there a mass movement. The Shin Beit was not wrong, when it called two of the leading members of the RCL (MM) in order to explain to them that the authorities have started to find our presence a bit too bothersome.

Let us now speak about our contacts with the representatives of the PLO. It is quite false to write, as I&P does, that we hoped to arrive at an ideological understanding with the PLO or one of its components. On the contrary, the base of our contacts, and eventual cooperation with the Palestinian National Movement is our *unconditional support* for the *Palestinian national struggle*. This without reflecting on the programs and the various strategies of Palestinian organizations. If an alliance between anti Zionist forces inside Israel and outside Israel is possible, it will occur on the basis of our contacts and eventual colonialism, and not on any view of liberated Palestine or on the strategy which may be used to reach our targets. Such a basis is really needed in order to create an organization or a party, not for a front or collaboration between *different* organizations.

When the project to prepare a common document was worked out, between a representative of the PLO and representatives of various anti-Zionist organizations, the RCL representative opposed, precisely, that such a document should deal with subjects connected with socialism or class struggle, stating that whatever united all of us was, precisely, not the problem of Zionism but the struggle for the national liberation of the Palestinian people and against Zionist colonialism (see MATZPEN MARXISTI Nos. 90-91, December 1976).

That is why we were not disappointed as far as the nature of the PLO's leadership goes, since we had no illusions and long before the meetings between the representatives of the PLO and those of the RCL, our organization had analyzed the Palestinian national movement, its limitations and the differences which separate us from its present leadership, while stating our firm wish to not only keep contact with this leadership, but also to become part and parcel of the national Palestinian movement and its structures (see INTERNATIONAL No.3, Spring 1975, MATZPEN MARXISTI No.83, January 1976).

We do not think that the PLO had any illusions left concerning the numerical strength of the anti Zionist forces in Israel, perhaps it had some concerning the force of moderate Zionists, which has pushed some of its middle-echelon cadres to make some verbal concessions - for which we are sorry - in order to

the RCL and the national Palestinian movement, with all its components, maintain a dialogue-support-discussion in the framework of one and the same camp. This goes further, of course, than diplomatic conjuncture.

Beyond mutual concessions and provisory agreements - both highly hypothetical, given the nature of Zionism - collaboration between revolutionaries in Israel and Palestinian militants is an irreversible phenomenon, even if it goes through ups and downs. This is the only real basis for a possible mobilization of the Jewish working masses against the Zionist state. The only way out of the cul-de-sac which the Palestinian question has become. The anti-Zionist revolutionary militants in Israel have been aware of this for a long while. Now, more and more Palestinian militants start understanding this. Uri Avnery and Matty Peled may find partners of their own kind, but these will never represent the Palestinian

propose a strategy close to that propounded by this tiny Israeli group, would have shown that only Habash's Popular Front does something of that kind. And Habash is very far from the Palestinian mainstream.

It is not enough to say that you support "unconditionally" all of the Palestinian national movement. This must also be true. The Palestinian national movement, as embodied by its leading organizations, the PLO and Fatah as its predominant component, has chosen a strategy quite opposed to that of the RCL in as far as Palestinian national interests are concerned, and not only in as far as these two ideologies differ socially. The PLO, for

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instance, suggested that Israel's Arabs vote for the Communist Party and, to some extent, for SHELI. If the RCL has helped some of the 12-14,000 abstaining Israeli Arabs decide on such a course - a thing highly doubtful, given the numerical and political insignificance of the RCL both among Jews and Arabs in Israel - it has worked at cross-purposes with the Palestinian national movement.

More: Mr Warshawski takes on himself and his grouplet the responsibility for this abstention when every Israeli activist knows full well the Arab Rejectionist forces inside Israel to be totally opposed to any kind of political contact with Jews, including the anti Zionists. It is a fact that Arab Student leaders and the Sons of the Place have had an influence on such abstentionism. The RCL has had little, or none.

This is understandable. The whole of the RCL militant membership has oscillated between four and twenty-four full-fledged Jewish members, and a few more Arabs. Given the 5,000 to 8,000 Jewish votes gathered by the Communists and their allies, given hundreds of Jewish activists in REKAKH, the RCL's pretensions appear slightly exaggerated, if we may say so.

Mr Warshawsky reaches the pinnacles of lyricism in his final paragraph, where he pretends to know what a "stable and believable" solution is, for the Palestinian question. With his four-to-twenty-four militants, Mr Warshawsky wants to bring about the "possible mobilization of the Jewish working masses against Zionism", and he wishes to do so not on the basis of obvious social injustice inside the Israeli establishment and society but rather, behind the banner of "restitution of all the rights of the Arab-Palestinian people", i.e., the taking apart of the State of Israel. Besides its patent injustice and lack of respect for Jewish self-determination such a course is, of course, removed from any kind of reality. One can agree with Mr Warshawsky, on the other hand, that it certainly is not conjunctural.

Finally, concerning I&P "hiding" the RCL's work: this Monthly Review has the declared policy of publicizing the peace-efforts and



use these elements to various ends, basically propaganda-oriented. This allows us to state with certainty that relations between the Palestinian national movement and the anti-Zionist revolutionaries of Israel are at their very beginning and will go on, precisely, because the latter do not demand that the PLO renounce its aims - those being quite identical with their own - nor its struggle, with which they express unconditional solidarity.

This is obviously not so as far as the moderate Zionists or even the Communist Party go, as these have aims which go against those of the Palestinian national movement. Isam Sartawi and Sabri Jiryis, on one side, and Matty Peled, Uri Avnery and Uzy Burstein, on the other, have diplomatic relations based, like any diplomatic contact, on power-relationships and on a conjunctural community of interests, while

national movement and their struggle cannot, therefore, base itself on a stable and believable solution. Such a solution belongs only to those who struggle for the restitution of all the rights of the Arab-Palestinian people and their anti-Zionist allies among the Jewish population of Israel.

**I&P ANSWERS:** Mr Warshawski's document is a good example of the incapacity of the Israeli anti-Zionist extreme left.

That an Ashkenazi Israeli Jew may presume to decide who, inside the Palestinian camp, may or "will never" represent the Palestinian national movement is not only a sign of the never-never land in which this extreme left works; it is also a clear indication of elitist and ethnic arrogance. An analysis of what forces, among the Palestinians, have goals identical with those of the RCL would have shown none such to exist. An analysis of which forces

the activities for human rights in Israel of even the smallest grouplet, and this includes the RCL. For years, I&P was boycotted by a variety of such grouplets, including the RCL and MATZPEN, because of our not being a "revolutionary" or "anti Zionist" newspaper and because we did not partake in the useless intellectualistic discussion they used to indulge in. One and a half years ago, I&P once more contacted routinely a variety of organizations asking for capsule-short information on their work, so as to publish it without comment.

Mr Warshawsky himself promised personally to the Editor of I&P, in Paris, to do so. Unfortunately, only the usual rivers of didactic material (an example of which is above letter) were sent. We have no time for working out nuggets of - doubtful - truth from this mass of verbiage. This is why we have taken the not-to-be-repeated decision to print that letter as it arrived. In the future, the RCL - like all other groups, great and small - will have to send in information, rather than ideological articles, if they wish their handiwork to be reprinted in a publication which, unlike the Trotskyite press, is dedicated to peace between Israelis and Arabs, rather than a hypothetical revolution of the Middle East now.

And speaking of the Trotskyite press, in Israel and outside that country - how many mentions of I&P's work have appeared there? If none, is not this a proof of a lack in the precise field concerning which Mr Warshawsky attacks us?

Dani Eilath writes from 31, Kotel Hamaaravi Street, Beer Sheva, Israel:

It is a very long time now that I am waiting to establish contacts with you. I am a member of MOKED since 1971-72 and my parents joined us a short time later. As one of the founders (but in the background) I guess I can see things in our movement and later in the Sheli-front that you can't. First, this framework or movement is not sacred for me so you can believe that I see it objectively. So let us first consider our views on Zionism: none of us has a racist view of the problem (not even Meir Pail). Our Zionism says that Israel should stay as a Jewish state (in the borders of 1967) and serve as a shelter for persecuted Jews around the world. In Israel the Jewish people can develop its culture and personality as a people (not in the way it has been doing since Ben Gurion, education and nationalism and denial of other people's rights influenced culture).

In a meeting held on Saturday, 25th June, in Tel Aviv by the left wing of Sheli (with the participation of Meir Pail, Danny Peter, Noemi Kiss, Hayim Baram and many others) Meir Pail said: "As we have Alyah for the Jews the Palestinians have to return to their land..."

Now, on this land there are two peoples with the same rights to live there and to self-

determination. History gave both peoples these rights but now we are fighting each other for them. Neither side is ready to recognize the other's rights. We should share the land so that both peoples will be able to fulfil the fundamental right of any people: to have its own land and to live in peace. I do not believe that anyone who won't give another people the right of self-determination, even in a so-called democratic and non-religious state with an Arabic or Jewish majority is clean of dishonesty.

The principle of two states will let the Palestinian and Jewish peoples realize their rights.

Then, we can talk about long-range plans such as a federation. I believe that the time of two socialist states will come one day and then it will be time to stop thinking about two states and start thinking about integration and a revolutionary struggle for our aim of the rule of the proletariat all over our planet. I am sure that we should go through the stage of two different states. No other solution would prevent repression of one side by the other (I am sorry that my - or should I say "their" Government finds it natural to use violence against people who fight for freedom).

Zionism is by no means a racist movement. Israeli Governments, WHICH DID discriminate and aggress minorities in Israel, did it in the name of Zionism with no right to do this.

Doing it is suicide. It's trying to show that the Jewish people is fighting against its own rights to be free by taking this right from others.

Now, some information that might interest you: in the Tel Aviv meeting, people decided to give a push to the left of the Sheli front and base its work on ideology and not on issues that come as conclusions to that ideology and, without backing of such an ideology, appear to be as empty as any other electoral view.

It may be that we shall organize as an extra-parliamentary movement and we have already started working towards this. As for KHA-DASH, most of us are ready to go down into the streets at their side on important issues, but still - we have different ideological views and in no way can only be seen as two sectarian groups.

I'll see to it that my movement subscribes to your paper so I will not be a minority as a reader of I&P and hope you find it necessary to print our reactions to your publication. I guess you are open-minded enough for that, not like some other papers I wrote to.

I&P ANSWERS: While we agree with much of what reader Eilath says, there seems to be

some confusion in his own views: if Israel is to be, in the foreseeable future, a Jewish state - what about the rights of the non-Jewish third minority? Should they not be safeguarded by law, as minorities had rights, say, in Poland before World War Two? As for Zionism, well, for anybody Zionism is as Zionism and just as Communism is as Communism.

Leo Cohn writes from Kfar Menachem, Ezer Sorek, Israel:

I find your magazine informative and important for getting a full perspective on events in the M.E. Some of the news you provide is, at best, inaccessible otherwise. Your paper helps me feel less isolated.

However, I feel that your extremely positive analysis of Arafat's actions and statements as leader of the PLO is not borne out by "objective" analysis of events from the point of view of the needs of the Palestinian people themselves.

(1) Under Arafat's leadership the major military actions of the PLO have been directed against OTHER ARABS and have led to heavy defeats costly in lives and support from the involved countries. The PLO's military struggle against Israel is obviously ineffective (especially when compared to that of the Arab States who force Israel to spend socially-crippled sums on the military, and to their relative "success" in the 1973 war); the PLO's military struggle has been at a virtual standstill for some time. The political struggle is being carried out more by the other Arab nations (and this to the Palestinians' detriment) and more ironically, last spring, by the Vichy Bank and Israeli Arabs who, though inspired by the PLO, are not directed or organized to any significant degree by the PLO.

(2) These defeats have been the result of the continuing cause of the dependence of the Palestinian liberation movement on one or several Arab nations, whose interests are often in conflict with those of the Palestinian people. The liberation movement's dependence means that it has become the tool of these nations and cannot act politically or militarily to realize its own goals. The Palestinians have, at one time or another, been used by (a) Egypt in the 1950's to harass Israel while being prevented from developing a PALESTINIAN armed or political struggle in that crucial period; (b) by Syria against Jordan in 1970 and (c) most recently by the Syrians as scapegoats in Lebanon in Syria's struggle for hegemony in the M.E. against Egypt.

(3) I was particularly disappointed at the several references in your magazine during the fighting in Lebanon as to how intelligent Arafat's tactics and strategy were. The Palestinians got involved (perhaps there was a possibility for them to have stayed out