The Year of the Intifada

Virtually no area of Israeli life was untouched, directly or indirectly, by the uprising in the occupied territories in 1988. The intifada (literally, "shaking off"), as the Palestinians in the territories called their multifaceted revolt against Israel's generation-long rule over them which began on December 9, 1987, impinged on the Israeli polity as few events had in the state's history, short of full-scale war. Ironically, the uprising occurred precisely in the year that Israel was celebrating the 40th anniversary of its establishment. The festivities went ahead largely as planned, but the tourists stayed home—a development that also contributed to the economic malaise, itself due in no small part to the intifada—and the general mood was muted.

Israel's major ally, the United States, tried to seize the opportunity to get Israel to embark on the road to a settlement with the Palestinians and Jordan as the first stage in a comprehensive Middle East settlement. However, the fact that 1988 was an election year both in Israel and the United States was not calculated to make Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his colleagues forsake their status-quo politics. Movement, however, was visible on the other side, near the end of the year. PLO chairman Yasir Arafat recited the litany of declarations which the United States had demanded since 1975 as the condition for launching a dialogue with the organization. Arafat's move, and the PLO's earlier declaration of a Palestinian state in the territories, were both results of the pressures generated by the intifada.

The confusion, fears, and uncertainty that were pervasive in Israel in 1988 were clearly reflected in the results of the November general election. The new government, which was essentially the old government—reconstituted after six weeks of coalition give-and-take—appeared ill equipped to deal with the urgent problems on the national agenda.
THE INTIFADA

The First Phase: "Force, Might, and Blows"

In its initial phase the intifada was impelled by sheer force of numbers and the unleashing of pent-up fury. Throughout the territories, in cities and towns, in villages and refugee camps, tens of thousands of people took to the streets and engaged Israeli troops in mass confrontations. Briefly, around the beginning of January, when the demonstrations tapered off, the Israeli military thought their assessment had been vindicated that the huge and bloody demonstrations in December—in which 22 Palestinians had been killed and scores wounded by live fire—had in fact been one more "wave of riots," albeit on an unprecedented scale, such as the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had coped with sporadically over the past two decades. On January 4, Prime Minister Shamir told Israel Radio: "I do not believe that the wave of disturbances will resume.... I do not believe that a new situation has been created.... [The Arab population in the areas] wants a return to normalcy, because it sees that these disturbances, acts of incitement and stone throwing do not lead anywhere."

Within days, however, of Shamir's reassuring statement, correspondents were describing the Gaza Strip as "looking like a war zone" after the army rushed in forces on a large scale, including armored personnel carriers, to put down a renewal of the violent mass demonstrations.

In addition, there were incipient signs that the uprising was seeking new directions, and that the demonstrations and riots were the prelude to more institutionalized forms of civil revolt. On January 7, Hanna Siniora, the editor of the East Jerusalem daily al-Fajr, urged the residents of the territories to launch a phased boycott of Israeli-made goods, culminating in a refusal to work for Israeli employers. Around the same time, the first leaflet of the "United National Command of the Uprising" was circulated in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It called on the population to observe a general strike from January 11-13, to "include all forms of revolutionary escalation." January 15, a Friday, the Muslim sabbath, was declared a "day of unity and solidarity," to be devoted to "commemorating the fallen of the uprising in requiem prayers and symbolic funerals." Thirty more leaflets were issued in 1988 by this shadowy leadership group, and all attempts by the security forces to put a stop to the phenomenon—by deportations, mass arrests, outlawing of organizations, and uncovering of clandestine printing presses—were unavailing.

The United National Command (UNC) was a coalition of Fatah, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Palestine Communist party. The group's close identification with the PLO was indicated by the motto that appeared at the head of each leaflet, beginning with the third one (January 18):
No voice rises above the voice of the uprising,
No voice rises above the voice of the Palestinian people
— the people of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Similarly, Hamas, the Gaza-based Islamic Resistance Movement, issued 33 leaflets in 1988, and occasional leaflets were issued by some of the smaller left-wing and religious organizations.

The ideological message of the leaflets was that the Palestinians could achieve their aim of hastening Israel's departure from the territories by engaging in a combination of violent and nonviolent activity. The former included stone-throwing, gasoline-bomb attacks, erecting barricades, the use of knives and axes, and actions against "collaborators." Nonviolent activity would include breaking off contact with Israel in the economic and service sectors, refusing to obey Israeli laws and regulations, and heightening internal solidarity.

In the first stage of the uprising, however, these long-term political objectives, whose culmination would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, were obscured by violence: a hail of rocks and other objects—often propelled with powerful slingshots from behind a thick curtain of acrid black smoke created by barricades of burning tires and accompanied by jeering, taunts, and curses—that greeted Israeli patrols in the territories. Israeli soldiers, unprepared and untrained in riot-control techniques, responded in the first instance with a liberal use of tear gas, including (as confirmed by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the Knesset) a more toxic type of gas than had previously been used by the IDF. Palestinians and groups such as Amnesty International alleged, and Israel denied, that tear gas was sometimes used in confined or semiconfined spaces, such as rooms in houses or schools, reportedly causing asphyxiation in some cases.

When tear gas failed to produce the desired effect, troops resorted to the use of live fire in "life-threatening situations." Rubber bullets, introduced in January, had no perceptible mitigating effect on the high casualty rates resulting from officers having to make instant interpretations of the phrase "life-threatening situation" when confronted with rampaging mobs who had lost all fear of the military and were masters of their own turf. It was in an effort to stem the tide of adverse media reports, domestic and external, that Defense Minister Rabin announced a new policy means to reduce the number of fatalities among Palestinian demonstrators. In the event, this proved even more controversial and more damaging to Israel's international image.

On January 19, during a tour of the West Bank, Rabin told reporters that the security forces' "top priority" was "to use force, might, and blows" [makot] to quell the violent demonstrations in the territories. A week later Ha'aretz quoted Rabin as telling defense reporters that the beatings policy had actually been in effect since January 4, and that, in combination with other measures including curfews and "hot pursuit" of demonstrators, it had "brought about calm which was more obvious in Gaza and less so in Judea-Samaria." In addition, Rabin said, this combination of
measures had "created the impact we wanted: the fear of the population." Another, less fortuitous, result of the new approach was a surge in media reports about what were officially termed "deviations" or "excesses" perpetrated by soldiers against the local population. Rabin himself conceded that some soldiers were "keen to deliver beatings," but insisted that, overall, troops were obeying the orders prohibiting the use of force after a riot had been dispersed and its instigators apprehended.

The problem was that, by the time the orders filtered down to the field units, they had become diffuse and vague. Young officers and soldiers took advantage of the unwritten rules to vent on the local population their frustrations caused, in essence, by their being called on to act as policemen in situations for which nothing in their combat training had prepared them. A Health Ministry report, cited by the Citizens' Rights Movement, stated that by the end of April, nearly 2,000 persons had been treated in local hospitals in the territories, the majority suffering from broken bones, after being beaten with truncheons.

The backlash inside Israel was reflected in the relatively large attendance—an estimated 40,000 people—at a Peace Now rally held in Tel Aviv on January 23. Speakers at the gathering called for the renewal of the peace process and an end to the "iron fist" policy in the territories. On January 29, an unusual petition, signed by nearly 500 Israeli mental-health practitioners, appeared in the Hebrew press. The signatories asserted that beyond the "fear and humiliation" suffered by the Palestinians in the territories during the two decades of the occupation, the situation was having "a horrendous impact upon the Jewish population as well... We are being swept into an existence marked by fear, violence and racism. We are losing our sensitivity to human suffering." In the same vein, 600 of the country's leading academics and intellectuals, including the sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt, the historian Shmuel Ettinger, and the writers Amos Oz and A. B. Yeshoshua, signed a petition expressing "profound concern" about Israel's future, urging the government to "reevaluate" its policy.

Within the IDF, too, concern was voiced at the long-term effects, especially on young soldiers, of the behavioral norms they were internalizing due to the nature of their service in the territories. The IDF's chief education officer, Brig. Gen. Nehemiah Dagan, initiated an information campaign against the dehumanization of the Palestinians. At the end of January, the army's military advocate-general, Brig. Gen. Amnon Strashnow, stated that he had ordered investigations into "recent incidents in which troops went beyond the use of reasonable force." Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, the O/C Central Command (whose area of responsibility included the West Bank), told reporters that some soldiers had been court-martialed and reassigned for beating Palestinians indiscriminately.

Defense Minister Rabin, replying in the Knesset on February 16 to motions for the agenda submitted by Mapam and the Citizens' Rights Movement on the implementation of "manifestly illegal" orders in the territories, denied having used the phrase "to break bones" or having sanctioned beatings as a punitive measure. Rabin explained that the first priority was to prevent outbreaks of violence; if nevertheless
a violent situation developed, tear gas was to be used in the first stage, then rubber bullets, and if these tactics failed, soldiers were to charge the rioters using force, including riot clubs. However, blows were to be administered only during the operation itself or during hot pursuit of rioters; if a stone thrower or other agitator took refuge in a house, soldiers were at liberty to enter that house, forcibly if necessary. Rabin acknowledged that “irregularities” had occurred and revealed that in two cases officers who had been involved in such incidents were under investigation. Rabin asserted that an “information campaign” had been launched in the IDF to ensure that soldiers understood the policy.

**TWO CASES OF BRUTALITY**

Nevertheless, “irregularities,” “deviations,” and “excesses” continued to be rumored and reported. (Some of the incidents became public knowledge only toward the end of the year, when those involved went on trial following lengthy Military Police investigations—see below.) Two of the most heavily publicized cases of brutality in the first part of the year occurred in February. In one, following a demonstration at the village of Kafr Salem, near Nablus, four young villagers were forced by soldiers to lie on the ground and were buried under a foot of wet earth by a bulldozer. They were dug out and revived by villagers after the troops left. General Mitzna, who did not learn about the incident until a week after it happened, was quoted as saying the incident was “beyond his worst dreams.” (Three soldiers—two privates and a master sergeant from the Civil Administration, were tried in connection with the incident. The privates were sentenced on March 29 to four and five months, respectively, in prison. Their prison terms were halved by an appeals court on May 17, two days after the master sergeant received a four-month prison term and was demoted to the rank of private.)

The second incident was revealed to the world on February 25, when CBS-TV screened a report showing Israeli soldiers viciously beating two Arabs sitting helplessly on the ground, hands tied behind their backs. Israeli TV screened only a brief segment from the full CBS report, followed by an interview with General Mitzna, who said he had been “shocked” by the incident and wanted to assure the public that “this behavior is still the exception.” Israeli embassies in Europe were deluged with protests from individuals, human rights organizations, and governments, and American Jewish leaders said it would be difficult to defend Israeli policy after this incident, which seemed to confirm the worst reports about what was going on in the territories. (An officer and two corporals faced trial in connection with the beating incident. As in the “burial” case, the charges against the three were mitigated in a plea-bargaining deal from “aggravated assault” to “shameful behavior” and “unbecoming conduct.” In April the three received suspended sentences, and the two corporals, who had done most of the beating, were demoted to the rank of private. The three judges noted that, given the conditions in the territories, especially
the provocative behavior of the local residents, "even the finest, the wisest and the most restrained of soldiers will find it difficult to muster the psychological strength and the forbearance enabling him to remain calm, cool and collected. . . .")

That such incidents, while extreme, were not as "exceptional" as Rabin and others claimed, was implicitly confirmed by Attorney General Yosef Harish. In a letter to the defense minister, made public on February 22, Harish wrote that the "large number of complaints about acts of abuse" in the territories received by his office "raises the suspicion that classification of these incidents as irregularities no longer reflects reality." Following the publication of Harish's letter, the chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron, broke the public silence he had maintained on the subject of the "aberrations." In a message to IDF commanders issued on February 23, Shomron noted that the "broad wave of violent riots and disturbances" in the territories had confronted the IDF with "one of the most complex and sensitive missions" it had ever faced. "The execution of this mission requires the use of force," Shomron continued, but its implementation must be tempered with the "self-control, restraint and sensitivity commensurate with the high norms of behavior incumbent upon IDF soldiers and commanders."

CONTINUING VIOLENCE; ESCALATING RESPONSE

Despite Defense Minister Rabin's declared justification for introducing the policy of beatings—that it would reduce the number of persons killed by firearms (and thus, it was hoped, lessen the pressure on Israel)—17 Palestinians were killed in January, 13 of them in the Gaza Strip, while February saw a dramatic increase to 32 deaths, this time the vast majority (27) occurring in the West Bank. One reason for the surge in casualties was that, in a concerted effort to break the uprising, more troops were dispatched to the territories with orders to confront Palestinian demonstrators more aggressively, as called for by the beatings policy, even in previously ignored remote villages, thus broadening and intensifying the cycle of violence.

March brought a rising number of Palestinian casualties and April even more; at least 40 Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops, including 16 on April 16, following the assassination in Tunis of Khalil al-Wazir, code-named "Abu Jihad," Yasir Arafat's deputy for military operations in Fatah. While the high number of casualties in April was in part a backlash from the Tunis operation, the surge in fatalities and wounding actually began during the final week of March as the Israeli authorities began to change their tactics in dealing with the uprising.

In mid-March, with firebomb attacks coming at an average rate of 4–5 a day, primarily in the West Bank, where settlers were more easily targeted, the regulations for opening fire in the territories were relaxed. Troops could now shoot at persons about to throw, or holding, or suspected of holding firebombs, on the ground that these devices were lethal weapons and hence constituted an immediate threat to soldiers' lives.
Another cause of the steep rise in Palestinian casualties was the new, explicit orders to officers to confront violent demonstrators "aggressively and assertively," not to back away from clashes with rioters even if this course of action placed the troops in a situation of concrete danger obligating them to open fire. This reversal of the previous policy, which had called for avoidance of confrontations with demonstrators, was meant to enable the security forces to demonstrate the qualities that had gained the IDF its reputation on the field of battle: tactical originality, improvisational ability, adherence to mission, and carrying the battle to the enemy.

The difference was that, in the occupied territories, as often as not, the "enemy" consisted of rock-throwing children. In an interview with Davar on March 18, Chief of Staff Dan Shomron articulated the dilemma facing the military: "[T]he long-term solution is entirely political," he explained. "There is no possibility of bringing about a solution through the use of military force, given the restrictions and limitations we have imposed on ourselves." Shomron added: "As long as we do not decide to alter the code of behavior of the State of Israel by employing firearms against unarmed civilians in the territories, there is no possibility of bringing about total calm through the use of the army."

CURFEW AND DEPORTATION

From the start of the uprising, one of the first Israeli countermeasures was to impose curfew on trouble spots, compounding the impact of the permanent commercial strike conducted by the Palestinians. Increasingly during the year, curfews, some continuing for extended periods and often aggravated by the authorities' severing of phone and other communications links to the outside, took on the character of a purely punitive measure and were utilized by the military to carry out search-and-arrest operations. Residents complained that they were prevented from receiving urgent medical treatment during curfews, and in some cases there were reports of food shortages, allegations that were denied by the IDF.

Probably there was not a curfew-free day in the territories during all of 1988. The Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip and the Tulkarm refugee camp in the West Bank spent 149 and 143 days, respectively, under full curfew. An indefinite night curfew (10 P.M. until 3 A.M.) was imposed on the entire Gaza Strip on March 14. The city of Nablus, with a population of more than 80,000, was under curfew for a total of more than two months in 1988. By the end of the year, even this measure was no longer a guarantee of quiet as it was increasingly defied, particularly by inhabitants of refugee camps.

A major cause of the renewed demonstrations in early 1988 was the IDF's announcement, on January 3, that deportation orders had been served that day to nine residents of the territories, five from the West Bank and four from the Gaza Strip. According to the communiqué, the nine were "leading activists and organizers involved in incitement and subversive activity on behalf of terrorist organiza-
tions." Ignoring both U.S. admonitions and a unanimous UN Security Council resolution adopted on January 5, citing the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention on "the protection of civilian persons in time of war," and calling on Israel "to refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilian from the Occupied Territories," Israel on January 13 expelled four of those on the list to Lebanon, the first of 32 Palestinians deported from the territories during 1988 (see also below).

Among those in the January 13 group was Jibril al-Rujoub, aged 35, from the town of Doura, near Hebron, who was one of the 1,500 security prisoners released in the 1985 deal with the Ahmed Jibril organization in return for three Israelis; before becoming deputy editor of a West Bank women's magazine, he was employed at the Center for Palestine Studies, in East Jerusalem, where he became, according to an IDF communique, the "right-hand man" of the institution's director, Faisal al-Husseini, himself described as "a senior Fatah activist now under administrative detention."

The deportation triggered a second Security Council resolution (January 14), this one passed by a vote of 14-0 (the United States abstained) and expressing "deep regret" at Israel's "defiance" of the earlier resolution. A no-confidence motion against the government on the same issue submitted in the Knesset by four left-wing parties (Mapam, Citizens' Rights, Communists, Progressive List for Peace) had been resoundingly defeated by the coalition on January 6. (The other five persons on the list of nine were deported on April 11, some ten weeks after dropping their appeals to the High Court of Justice, a step they took, according to their lawyer, "in order not to legitimize the court's authority to decide their fate following the submission of secret evidence that they will not be allowed to see.")

Jerusalem—"Scars and Coexistence"

One of the entrenched Israeli conceptions undermined by the intifada was that of a reunited Jerusalem, its Jewish and Arab populations living in separate but equal—and peaceful—coexistence. (East Jerusalem was sovereign Israeli territory, having been formally annexed in 1967.)

Jerusalem had remained relatively quiet during the first month or more of the intifada. This situation came to a dramatic and violent end on Friday, January 15, when police and Border Police clashed with worshipers who streamed out of the Al Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount, following the weekly prayers, chanting anti-Israel slogans, throwing rocks, and burning the Israeli flag. Police wearing gas masks and face shields fired dozens of canisters of tear gas at the rioters and charged them, riot clubs flailing. About 70 Palestinians and 6 policemen were hurt in the melee, and 8 demonstrators were arrested. The sensitivity of the site and the massive presence of the foreign media ensured that the event would receive extensive coverage abroad. Israeli officials vehemently denied reports that tear gas had been fired directly into the Al Aqsa mosque, although conceding that tear gas might have wafted into the building from outside.

A week later, on January 22, the previously unthinkable happened: for the first
time since the Six Day War, curfew was imposed in one of the capital's neighborhoods, A-Tur, lying between Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives. The step was especially galling for Mayor Teddy Kollek, as it was taken without informing him, via an emergency order issued by the O/C Central Command, General Mitzna, at the request of the police. At Kollek's urging, the curfew was lifted about 20 hours after being declared. It had been imposed after youngsters from the village blocked the road to the Al-Maqassed Hospital and the Intercontinental Hotel for four consecutive days by burning tires, erecting barriers, and stoning vehicles. While the curfew was in effect, all males in A-Tur between the ages of 10 and 50 were ordered to gather in the local schoolyard where they were checked by security personnel; four were arrested.

Sporadic violence continued throughout the year in East Jerusalem—whose status as sovereign Israeli territory ironically enabled it to become, in effect, the political-intellectual center of the uprising—and in outlying refugee camps and villages incorporated within the municipal boundaries after the 1967 war. The commercial strike in East Jerusalem intensified, although a leaflet issued by the leadership of the uprising permitted stores to open for three hours a day so that residents would not have to shop in the city's western section—where, just minutes from the Arab area, life went on normally, at least on the surface.

On February 5, the Jerusalem municipality decided, for the first time ever, to close down all 31 public schools in East Jerusalem for a week, due to their part in the unrest, low attendance by the 16,000 pupils, and threats to the lives of headmasters by the organizers of the commercial strike (private schools in East Jerusalem had been closed for some time).

Residents of some of the Jewish neighborhoods built after 1967 in former Jordan-held territory could corroborate Kollek's plaint that "coexistence in the city is collapsing." In East Talpiot, large numbers of police and Border Police fired tear gas canisters and rubber bullets on February 7 to repulse hundreds of youngsters who marched into the neighborhood from the adjacent Arab village of Jabel Mukaber, carrying Palestinian flags, chanting nationalist slogans, and throwing rocks through windows of houses and a school. A similar march by about 500 youngsters from the Shuafat refugee camp toward the nearby Pisgat Ze'ev neighborhood was forcibly broken up. The No. 25 bus, connecting the city to the Neve Ya'akov quarter on the road to Ramallah, was stoned 40 times in the first two months of the uprising.

Serious disturbances were also reported within the walls of the Old City. On July 3, workers in an archeological dig sponsored by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Western Wall area dug a hole on a Muslim Quarter street (adjacent to the Via Dolorosa, where Christian pilgrims were touring) to gain better access to a water tunnel from the Hasmonean period. Immediately, rumors spread—fanned by the muezzin using the powerful loudspeakers on the Temple Mount—that "the Jews" were trying to seize control of one of the gates to the mount and to undermine Muslim structures. Fifteen local residents and one policeman were injured in a fierce two-hour riot that ensued in the Old City.

On July 19, Jerusalem experienced its first fatal casualty of the uprising. Sixteen-
year-old Nidal Rabadi, from the Old City's Christian Quarter, was shot and killed, reportedly after a bus was stoned on the Jerusalem-Ramallah road and passengers, including soldiers, opened fire at fleeing Arabs. Rabadi's funeral, held on Mount Zion following a procession through the Christian Quarter, triggered serious rioting. Attendance at the Western Wall for the traditional 9th of Av fast-day prayers (July 23–24) marking the destruction of the Temple was down by 80 percent as compared with previous years.

The statistics relating to Jerusalem were as astonishing as those for the territories. According to official data, Jerusalem—more specifically, East Jerusalem—in 1988 experienced 114 firebomb attacks, 283 cases of tire burning, 1,766 incidents of stone throwing, and 708 incidents of road blocking. Besides these 2,963 violent incidents (of which more than 20 percent occurred in the final month of the year, in a pattern similar to the events in the territories), on 1,229 occasions the Palestinian flag was hoisted in the capital.

In effect, Jerusalem in 1988 was once more a divided city. Few Jewish Jerusalemites or other Israelis ventured into the city's eastern section, including the Old City, and even at the Western Wall fewer worshipers turned up on holy days. Jerusalem also suffered in other ways from the intifada. The general decline in foreign tourism to Israel during the year affected Jerusalem disproportionately. But it was hard to blame foreigners when even Israelis stayed away—school trips to the capital from all over the country, a staple of the curriculum, were nearly all canceled under pressure from parents fearful for their children's safety. Businesses in the Jerusalem area that were dependent on workers from the territories, particularly garages and the construction industry, had to cope with frequent employee absenteeism due to curfews imposed by the military and/or general strikes called by the leadership of the uprising. Mayor Teddy Kollek seemed to be on the mark when he said, in mid-February, that the situation in the capital had "changed in a fundamental way," adding: "Coexistence is not dead, but I'm sure there will be deep scars left when this is over."

Israel's Image—The Media Connection

A mid-January meeting with President Chaim Herzog (scheduled before the uprising began) gave a delegation of the Foreign Press Association in Israel the opportunity to protest at the highest level against what they described as a "campaign of vilification" against foreign media representatives in Israel due to their reporting on the events in the territories. In part, they charged, Israeli government officials were the cause of this climate of opinion, which had resulted in physical attacks on journalists by settlers and soldiers. In his response, President Herzog voiced the long-standing Israeli complaint that media reporting did not provide the "full perspective" on the situation in the territories, such as the considerable rise in the living standard of the inhabitants there since 1967. Herzog noted further that the alternative was not between violence and negotiations, "but to contain the
trouble and see that it does not get out of hand, or deteriorate into another Teheran or Beirut.”

For Israeli policymakers, who feared in the initial phase of the intifada that the situation was about to lurch out of control, the media became a popular scapegoat. Thus, just days after the start of the uprising, Prime Minister Shamir suggested that a connection existed between the events and the presence of journalists in the territories. At that time, however, Chief of Staff Shomron came to the support of the press by persuading Shamir that closure of the territories to the press would be both impractical and counterproductive.

As the first serious attempt by the politico-military establishment to cope with the problem, on January 24 the defense establishment opened a “Media Information Center on Events in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza” to provide the Israeli press, but primarily the foreign media—the 200 correspondents regularly stationed in Israel and the more than 700 others who had arrived to cover the uprising—with “accurate and reliable information on the activity in the territories on a daily basis.”

A practical problem was that information was to be given out only “after it had been corroborated by all relevant Civil Administration and IDF units,” to ensure that information was both comprehensive and correct. In practice, the cumbersome army bureaucracy, compounded by stringent field-security considerations, often delayed official reactions to events, enabling Palestinian sources to put out their own versions of events first and meet journalists’ deadlines. In some cases, the IDF Spokesman’s Unit was itself the unwitting victim of false reporting and misinformation from the field. Thus, an initial denial about the “bulldozer burying incident” later had to be retracted. The Media Information Center operated for about seven weeks during the height of the mass violence (January 24–March 18), issuing a daily “Operational Update” sheet summing up the day’s events in the territories. Such efforts, however well-intentioned, could not overcome the gap between official pronouncements and the situation in the field as it was documented by the media and other foreign observers.

The information center’s closure came, coincidentally or not, in conjunction with a shift in the overall Israeli approach toward the uprising. In late March the army began imposing new, collective measures—emergency orders of various kinds—that impinged on journalists as well as on the Palestinian population.

In connection with Land Day—an annual event (March 30) on the calendar of Israeli Arabs, commemorating a violent general strike held in 1976 to protest land expropriations—residents of the territories would not be permitted to enter or leave Israel proper for three days, and a full curfew was imposed. Journalists could enter the territories and move about in them “only upon authorization of the IDF Spokesman’s Office [and then] only if escorted by an IDF representative.” Informally it was explained that media presence was known to trigger rioting. The IDF said that it would organize “press pools,” an arrangement in which small groups of journalists could cover a story and share the material with their colleagues.

This unprecedented move, amounting to the reinstatement of the pre-1967 Green
Line, led the Foreign Press Association to take an unprecedented move of its own: the association petitioned the High Court of Justice against the IDF. The closure of the territories to the media, the petition argued, "constitutes a grave and unprecedented infringement of freedom of the press and the public's right to know." At the hearing, held on March 30, Nili Arad, from the State Attorney's Office, representing the IDF and the defense establishment, declared without embellishment, "This is a real war. The situation in the field is the same as in a war. Therefore the military commander found it necessary to close the area and declare it a military zone." The justices did not grant an interim order allowing the press into the territories that day, though they did commit the court to deal with the principles involved at a later date. Effectively, the army had its way.

In the event, neither the absence of the media from the territories on Land Day (with the exception of two pool teams totaling about 15 journalists), nor the stringent measures imposed by the military—including orders to the heavily reinforced troops to act "firmly and forcefully" against all attempts to disrupt public order—prevented the outbreak of widespread violent disturbances, particularly in the rural areas of the West Bank. The day's toll: 4 persons killed (all in West Bank villages) and at least 50 wounded in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (where refugee-camp residents defied the curfew and demonstrated) by IDF gunfire. Six Israelis—three soldiers and three civilians—were injured by stones.

Besides the blanket sealing off of the area for several consecutive days at critical times—notably around Land Day and Independence Day, during the Palestine National Council session in November that proclaimed an "independent Palestinian State," and when Arafat appeared at the UN in December—curfew was routinely imposed over whole populations, and the authority to declare an area a "closed military zone" was granted to the "senior officer" at the site, whatever his rank, instead of "military commanders." This measure was frequently resorted to on an "instant" basis to keep the press at bay during disturbances: officers reportedly took to carrying closure orders prepared in advance, which they brandished at the first sign of trouble.

**Palestinian Press**

Paralleling the process through which the military exercised growing control over media access to the territories, the authorities continued to target, far more intensively than in past years, the East Jerusalem-based Palestinian press. Four of the 32 Palestinians deported in 1988 were journalists, including two, Bashir Nafeh (April 11) and Samir Sbeihat (August 1), from the East Jerusalem daily al-Fajr. The exponential increase in the recourse to "administrative detention" (arrest without trial based on classified material under the 1945 Defense [Emergency] Regulations promulgated by the British Mandate government and not repealed by Israel) to suppress the intellectual leadership of the uprising netted at least 20 Palestinian journalists.
Both the Gaza Press Service and al-Awda magazine were closed down by the authorities (the former for six months) in 1988, as were the English-language version of al-Awdah and its parent company, Palestine Press Services, for six months on March 31, extended for an additional year on September 30. The latter had been especially valued by the foreign press as a source of information about the territories. Several other press and information offices were also shut down for periods ranging from three months to a year. In all these cases, the authorities charged that the publications and information officers were “tools” or “fronts” for various Palestinian terrorist organizations and were funded by them.

Inside Israel, for the second year running, an Israeli-Palestinian publication based in West Jerusalem, legally registered with the Interior Ministry, abiding by military censorship regulations and supplying reliable information on the occupied territories, was shut down and its staff arrested and accused of security offenses. In 1987 this had been the fate of the fortnightly News from Within, published by the Alternative Information Center (see AJYB 1989, p. 376), while in 1988 the publication in question was a radical left-wing fortnightly called Derekh Hanitzotz (“by means of the spark”) in its Hebrew version and Tariq al-Sharara in its Arabic version. On February 16, Ribhi Arouri, the paper’s Palestinian editor, was arrested, interrogated for three weeks, and placed under administrative detention. Two days after his arrest the weekly was shut down by order of the commissioner of the Jerusalem District on the ground that it had ties with Nayef Hawatmeh’s Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). However, only when the paper’s Jewish editorial staff of four were detained one by one during April and May did the story make headlines in Israel.

The four, all in their 30s, were Ya'akov Ben-Efrat and his estranged wife, Roni Ben-Efrat; Michal Schwartz, the daughter of a distinguished Israeli historian, Prof. (emeritus) Yehoshua Arieli; and Assaf Adiv, who had been the paper’s publisher and the brother of Ehud Aviv, paroled in 1985 after serving a lengthy prison term for spying on behalf of the Syrians. Like the case of the Alternative Information Center the previous year, the closure of Derekh Hanitzotz and the arrest of its editors attracted international attention and gave rise to charges that “national security” was being falsely brandished in order to stifle press freedom and deny the public information.

On May 25, the four Israelis under arrest were charged with a number of security violations, including membership in a terrorist organization and contact with a foreign agent. According to the charge sheet, they had made contact with DFLP personnel in London in late 1983 or early 1984 and had agreed to publish a paper in Israel with DFLP funding and to set up a Jewish-Arab political organization—as indeed they had done. On June 16, Supreme Court justice Aharon Barak accepted the appeal of the State and overturned a decision by the Jerusalem district court to release three of the four detainees on bail. Citing the extreme gravity of the charges, Barak ordered that all four be held in custody until the end of the proceedings against them. The trial began in September before a tribunal in the Jerusalem district
court, with the prosecution announcing that it would call 29 witnesses, including 17 Shin Bet (General Security Service) agents whose testimony would be heard in camera, although the rest of the proceedings were open to the public.

**Second Phase—Fighting the “Alternative Government”**

By mid-March the emerging perception of the Israeli defense establishment was that in the territories Israel faced a situation of “war by other means.” The ultimate aim of the uprising was, as the leaflets issued by the United National Command suggested, not to throw the Jews into the sea but to replace the Israeli administration in the territories with an “alternative government” run by the Palestinians. As early as March, Palestinian employees of the Civil Administration, particularly policemen and tax-department clerks, had obeyed the leadership’s call to resign. Leaflet No. 10 (March 10, 1988), for example, declared: “We renew our call for merchants to refrain from paying taxes . . . . The popular committees, including the merchant committees, should supervise the implementation of this directive.” Furthermore, “our shopkeepers” were urged “to boycott both Israeli and foreign products where there is a locally produced alternative.” Businesses and professionals—doctors, pharmacists, and lawyers—were urged to lower their prices: “Now is the time for real solidarity between all sections of our society.”

From the Palestinians’ standpoint, a major achievement of the uprising was the forging of this sense of solidarity and of a shared destiny among all sectors of their society. The different political camps overcame their differences to form the United National Command of the Uprising, and virtually all the social strata in the territories took part in the insurrection, in one form or another. Writing in the *Jerusalem Post* in September, Shukri B. Abed, an Israeli Arab researcher at the Hebrew University’s Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, argued that the events in the territories should be seen in part as a “social revolution” within Palestinian society:

> The *intifada* is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is, to be sure, a *political* phenomenon, an “uprising” against the long years of oppressive occupation. But it is also a *social and psychological* phenomenon: an awakening, a self-cleansing, a breaking away from the Palestinians' own past, from the heavy weight of inherited social structures that have outlived their usefulness. [Emphases in the original.]

> It was the security forces’ struggle against the growing manifestations of autonomy in the territories, chiefly through the use of bureaucratic and administrative measures, that dominated the second phase of Israel’s struggle against the *intifada*.

**PREVENTING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

On March 19, the Shabiba youth movement was outlawed in the territories, several hundred of its activists—nearly all from the West Bank—were arrested, and
a number of youth clubs that had served as centers of activity for the Shabiba were closed down by administrative fiat. For some years, the Shabiba ("youth" in Arabic) had, in effect, filled the vacuum created by the absence of a recognized leadership in the territories. Over the years—well before the intifada—the Shabiba had become a dominant force in the territories, especially in West Bank high schools and refugee camps. In the camps, they engaged in communal and cultural activity, though this was tinged with heavy ideological-nationalist overtones.

According to the military, the Shabiba was outlawed because it was a "front organization" for Fatah, and its activists were instigators of violence. Beyond this, it was noted, the move was part of a concerted drive by the Israeli authorities to suppress attempts aimed at escalating the civil revolt and creating independent, Palestinian-run administrative structures as an alternative to the Civil Administration.

Exactly five months after the outlawing of the Shabiba movement, on August 18, the so-called popular committees that had sprung up in the territories were also declared illegal. Members of the committees, persons attending meetings sponsored by them, found in possession of leaflets issued by them, or donating money to them were liable to a ten-year prison term. Unlike the Shabiba, the popular committees were a distinctly intifada-related phenomenon, although in some cases their origins preceded the uprising. The committees, which had been set up in virtually every village, refugee camp, and urban neighborhood in the territories, were responsible at the grass-roots level for providing various social and communal services to the population in the emergency situation engendered by the uprising.

The legal problem faced by the authorities in combating these essentially mutual-aid activities was that they were not manifestly criminal or unlawful or violent in character. Thus, for example, "medical assistance committees" based in Ramallah, which had operated openly for some time before the uprising, expanded their work during the intifada within the framework of the popular committees. The popular committees also organized classes in private homes for school-aged children in the wake of the extended closure of the educational system in the territories.

What particularly troubled the defense establishment was the process by which these committees were undermining the Civil Administration by creating alternative institutions, in this case at the level of community services, and imbuing the population with a growing sense of independence. In an Israel Radio interview on August 18, Defense Minister Rabin—who on more than one occasion had complained that existing laws prevented the military from dealing with the uprising efficiently—stated that the outlawing of the popular committees (under a special order drawn up by defense establishment legal advisers based on the 1945 Defense [Emergency] Regulations) provided "a convenient legal tool" for dealing with the problem. Rabin explained that the security authorities had decided to act against the popular committees because "they constitute a basis for the continuation and institutionalization of the uprising."

In fact, the committees continued to function, as did two other bodies that were
also banned: the “regional guidance committees,” which organized demonstrations and disturbances against the Israeli authorities at the local level; and the “strike forces,” groups of young toughs who acted as “enforcers” for the United National Command of the Uprising and operated against “collaborators” with the Israeli authorities. (A number of suspected or known “collaborators” were killed by other Palestinians during the year—see below.)

Other organizations targeted in 1988 included trade unions and various charitable societies. Such associations had been closed down sporadically in previous years, but as the uprising took root in the territories, the drive against them appeared to become more systematic. Among the charitable, social, and educational organizations closed down—on June 20, for a two-year period—was the In’ash al-Usra (family rehabilitation) society in the town of el-Bireh, the largest body of its kind in the West Bank. It had been operating for 23 years and was run by a well-known woman activist in the territories, Samiha Khalil, aged 65. The closure order (which excluded the orphanage and kindergarten) followed a raid on the organization’s premises on June 8, while el-Bireh was under curfew, in which the Israeli authorities reported that they had seized inflammatory and anti-Semitic material, including videotapes and printed literature. In a press conference held on June 21, the society’s staff denied all the charges and asserted that the closure would deprive thousands of Palestinian women of their earnings from various community projects and hundreds of underprivileged children of vital services. The society subsequently petitioned the High Court of Justice to rescind the closure order, shortly after Khalil was charged with incitement and distribution of “hostile material.”

DEPORTATIONS

In addition to closing down institutions, the authorities also took administrative measures against individual activists. The harshest of these was deportation. As already mentioned, 32 Palestinians were deported in 1988—the most in a single year since 1972—and expulsion orders were pending against another 27 persons at year’s end. Besides journalists, the list of deportees included trade-union and campus activists. Six of the eight persons expelled on April 19 were from the West Bank village of Beita, having been singled out for their involvement in the catastrophic incident there two weeks earlier (see below). The vast majority (25) of the still-pending deportation orders were against persons who, according to the IDF communiqué, were “directly involved in the actions and operations of the ‘popular committees’ according to instructions from the terrorist organizations, whose aim is for these committees to replace the Civil Administration in the territories.”

The legal proceedings involving three of the deportees—Abd al-Nasser al-Affo, aged 32, Jamal Ahati al-Hindi, aged 30, both from Jenin and both activists at an-Najah University in Nablus; and Abd al-Aziz Uda Rafih, a leading “ideologue and spiritual mentor” of the Islamic Jihad movement in the Gaza Strip, according
to the IDF—predated the intifada. They had appealed the expulsion order to the High Court of Justice (even though the High Court had never blocked a deportation order), arguing that deportations from the territories constituted a violation of Article 49 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention.

In a benchmark decision handed down on April 10, the court, sitting in an expanded panel of five justices headed by Supreme Court president Meir Shamgar, dismissed the petition. The court found that the relevant paragraph of Article 49 had to be read in the context of the World War II situation. The idea, according to the Israeli justices, had been to prevent mass transfers such as those carried out by the Nazis for extermination or forced labor, and therefore Article 49 did not refer to expulsions for security reasons.

MUBARAK AWAD

The High Court was also called on to rule in a deportation case of a different category, one which became a cause célèbre. Mubarak Awad, aged 44, a self-proclaimed disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and the director of the East Jerusalem-based Center for the Study of Nonviolence, had been targeted by the security authorities even before the intifada as a fomenter of unrest in the territories. However, there were both technical and political problems. Awad was a Jerusalem native who held American citizenship and enjoyed the protection of the American embassy and the intercession on his behalf of the highest levels of the State Department. In other circumstances Awad might have been left alone—especially as he was said to have little personal following in the territories—but with the intifada raging, his ideas could be depicted as helping to ignite a full-scale civil revolt.

As a native of Jerusalem, Awad had been granted permanent residence in Israel but had declined citizenship when East Jerusalem was annexed in 1967. In 1970 he went to study in the United States, eventually receiving a doctoral degree in psychology. He was granted resident status in 1973 and U.S. citizenship five years later. He visited Israel some 15 times after 1983, entering as a tourist on his U.S. passport, and in 1985 he established the Center for the Study of Non-Violence in East Jerusalem. On May 5, 1988, Prime Minister and Acting Interior Minister Yitzhak Shamir signed an order for Awad’s deportation on the ground that Awad had been in the country illegally since November 1987, when his visa expired. Moreover, according to a May 6 communiqué issued by the prime minister’s media adviser, Aviezer Pazner, via the Government Press Office—one of a series of position papers issued in the case, due to the American connection and intense media interest: "Awad caused harm to the security of the state and to public order," the center he headed "received [funds] from terror organization sources abroad," and its purpose was "to develop in Judea, Samaria and Gaza a widespread movement of 'passive resistance' that would stir up a civilian uprising and force Israel to retreat from these areas."
His avowed nonviolent philosophy notwithstanding, Awad was also accused of supporting the PLO's "armed struggle" and of "having contacts with the PLO leadership." He was described as being "one of the main contributors" to the uprising in the territories, having helped to draft leaflets of the United National Command.

Awad was arrested on May 6; on May 8 he appealed the deportation order to the High Court of Justice, but lost the appeal. Awad was deported to the United States on June 13, where he immediately became a media star, carrying his message to the American public. On June 15, Ha'aretz reported that the O/C Central Command, General Mitzna, then in the States on a lecture tour, had told Israeli embassy staff that it was difficult to know where Awad was doing more damage to Israel—in Jerusalem or in the United States.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

One of the principal measures resorted to by the authorities to eradicate the intifada involved the use of administrative detention on an unprecedented scale. Under the Israeli occupation, the practice had been widespread until the late 1970s but was nearly abandoned between 1980 and 1985. Moreover, in 1980 the procedures for implementing administrative detention were tightened in the wake of assurances given by Prime Minister Menahem Begin to U.S. president Jimmy Carter (at Egypt's request). Under the amended ordinance, only a "regional commander" (a major general) could issue an administrative-detention order (until then, this prerogative belonged to any "military commander" holding the rank of colonel or above), incarceration was limited to six months, and judicial review was provided for beyond what the Geneva Convention required.

Like other measures, such as deportations and house demolitions, reinstituted by Defense Minister Rabin after all but being jettisoned under the Begin government, administrative detention was restored as an active deterrent measure in mid-1985. Over 300 persons were administratively detained in the following 30 months, until the outbreak of the intifada, and some 70 persons were serving terms of detention on December 9, 1987, when the uprising began. On March 17, 1988 (the day before the Shabiba movement was outlawed), Chief of Staff Shomron approved a harsher version of the regulations governing administrative detention than that in force before 1980. Under the new rules, any military commander could issue an administrative detention order for a six-month period with the possibility of its extension. The entire judicial review process was abolished, and the detainee's only recourse was to appeal the order—at his own initiative—before a military appeals committee possessing limited powers.

Again Israel was willing to brave American and international criticism and to violate its own pronouncements concerning its principles in the territories—in this case, that administrative detention was an exceptional measure and was imple-
merited, in accordance with the stipulates of the Geneva Convention, only in special cases—to achieve its goal of quelling the uprising. No fewer than 4,000 administrative-detention orders were issued in the course of 1988 (the figure was given by the military advocate-general, Brig. Gen. Amnon Strashnow, in an interview with the IDF weekly Bamahaneh, November 23), the vast majority against Palestinian intellectuals and professionals—lawyers, human-rights monitors, journalists, and campus, trade-union, and community activists. At year’s end, some 1,500 persons were still being held in administrative detention, more than 20 times the figure on the eve of the uprising.

Once more, the most prominent Palestinian held in administrative detention was Faisal al-Husseini, who had been imprisoned without charge almost consecutively since April 1987. Husseini was released on June 9 from two successive periods of administrative detention totaling nine months, but was again detained, this time for six months, on July 31 by order of the defense minister. At the same time, the East Jerusalem-based Arab Studies Society founded and headed by Husseini was closed down for a year by order of the O/C Central Command under the 1945 Defense (Emergency) Regulations. According to the police announcement, Husseini had “renewed his subversive and hostile activities within the framework of the Fatah organization” immediately after being released in June, and had engaged in “coordination, incitement [and] institutionalization of the uprising.” The Arab Studies Society was said to be “controlled and financed by Fatah” and to have served as the venue for “meetings of activists in terrorist organizations.” Following a past pattern, Husseini’s July arrest came four days after he spoke at a Peace Now meeting and advocated a two-state solution.

The huge number of arrests in 1988—in addition to the 4,000 administrative detainees, 17,000 other Palestinians were taken into custody at some point during the year (according to a briefing by Defense Minister Rabin to the Knesset’s Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee on December 28)—placed a tremendous strain on the existing detention facilities in the territories. At any given time 5,000 persons were in prison for intifada-related offenses, of whom about a quarter were administrative detainees.

To cope with the overload, new military prisons were set up, including one in December 1987 at Dahariya, near Hebron, on the grounds of an IDF base, and in mid-March 1988 at Ketziyot, in the Negev desert—inside Israel proper—not far from the border with Egypt. Complaints about serious overcrowding at both installations as well as intolerable physical conditions and abusive treatment by prison guards were voiced frequently during the year.

On December 20, an officer and four soldiers, one of them a woman, were sentenced to prison terms after being convicted on 22 counts of assaulting and maltreating bound and blindfolded detainees at Dahariya in March. The court, basing itself on testimony given during the trial, concluded that abuse of prisoners was “the norm” at Dahariya. On December 28, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel made public a report on Dahariya drawn up following a visit by an ACRI
delegation a month earlier. The group had found that, despite efforts to improve conditions, in its present state the facility remained "unfit for human beings."

At Ketziyot, where nearly all the administrative detainees were incarcerated, it took a visit by three Supreme Court justices before improvements were reported. On April 27, a petition to the High Court of Justice was filed by 14 administrative detainees at Ketziyot. They argued that their incarceration outside the occupied territories was unlawful because the order under which they were detained specified that the detention facility must be located in an area subject to military command—Israel in fact declared the detention site a "closed military area"—and violated Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibited the transfer of residents of occupied zones to the territory of the occupying power. The petition also referred to the "inhuman" physical conditions in the huge tent complex and the "brutal" behavior of the guards. The 14 were joined by 3 other detainees, incarcerated in the West Bank, who asked the court to block their transfer to Ketziyot.

On September 1, the three justices sitting in the case, led by Supreme Court president Meir Shamgar, took the unusual step of visiting the facility. Of the 2,750 prisoners there at the time, all but 312 were administrative detainees. The judges, attired in black suits despite the searing heat, heard inmates' complaints about living conditions, punishments for infractions of the rules, and the inability of the review boards to cope with the volume of appeals—fewer than half of the appeals submitted had been heard. In its decision, handed down on November 8, the High Court rejected the detainees' petition but was critical of the conditions at the facility and recommended establishment of an advisory committee to monitor conditions at the camp (this was duly set up, headed by a military judge).

COLLECTIVE MEASURES

The IDF consistently denied that it employed collective punishments (prohibited under the Geneva Convention) in the territories. When Chief of Staff Shomron was asked point-blank, in an interview (October 28) with Israel TV's Arabic Language Service, whether "the policy of collective punishment [will] continue," he declared unequivocally that "no policy of collective punishment exists." He then added: "Anyone who claims that this is a popular uprising should not be surprised if some of the punishments are directed against large groups... Whoever contends that an entire village is involved in the uprising has to understand that, unfortunately, some [IDF] responses will entail harm to the entire village."

Probably the most sweeping and sustained action of this kind taken in the occupied territories, primarily in the West Bank, was the shutting down of the educational system for most of the year. To begin with, all the institutions of higher learning throughout the territories were closed early in 1988, "until further notice," and were not permitted to reopen for the rest of the year. This measure affected about 18,000 students in the West Bank and 3,500 in Gaza, as well as several
thousand faculty and administrative staff. As in other spheres, the measures against this sector took to a logical extreme patterns that had evolved previously: in the years leading up to the intifada, the universities and colleges had been targeted with growing frequency by the military as "hotbeds of incitement."

Measures against the lower educational system, however, were implemented with a methodical intensity different from anything that had gone before. The 1,194 government (i.e., Civil Administration), private, and UNRWA schools in the West Bank—at the elementary, junior-high, and high-school levels—with a total enrollment of some 310,000 pupils, were closed down on February 4 and allowed to reopen (on a staggered basis) starting at the end of May, were shut down for two days in mid-June, and closed again from July 21 until November 30, reopening on December 1. Effectively, the entire 1987–88 school year was lost in the West Bank. By contrast, in the Gaza Strip the school system continued to function normally. Indeed, in Gaza an extra three weeks were added to the school year in June to partially compensate for the large number of days lost, even when schools were open, due primarily to extended curfews. Even in East Jerusalem, more than 35 different closure orders were issued, and for all but kindergarten and first-grade pupils the school year opened late in the fall of 1988.

To the Palestinians, at least, the most convincing proof that the Israeli claim that the closures were necessitated by security considerations was a mere pretext was the military's relentless drive against all forms of "alternative education" or "popular education." Troops raided small classes held in private homes, often arresting those present. Indeed, from this point of view, the shutting down of the educational system was counterproductive for the Civil Administration, since the establishment of independent educational frameworks helped the Palestinians cut themselves off from the Civil Administration. At the same time, the leadership of the uprising was also unhappy with this state of affairs. Even though three-quarters of the pupils in the West Bank attended government-run schools—run, that is, by the Civil Administration—Palestinians at all levels demanded the reopening of the schools to prevent what they feared would be irreversible damage to the young generation.

The Bureaucratic War

The Israeli authorities recognized that even if the struggle for the hearts and minds of the populace was a lost cause, the outward trappings of orderly relations had to be retained. This was essential, in the short term, to ensure the smooth functioning of the Military Government—including the collection of taxes from the residents, the Civil Administration's primary source of revenue. In the longer term, the authorities sought to prevent the creation of a vacuum that would be filled by the PLO and eventuate in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.
The commercial sector was an early and ongoing arena of struggle. The commercial strike in the territories and in East Jerusalem, which was launched immediately after the start of the intifada, was one of the most blatant signs of the population's defiance of the authorities as well as of Palestinian solidarity. The defense establishment spared no efforts, therefore, to break the strike. Initially, methods used in previous years were tried: shopkeepers were ordered to open for business; if this failed to produce the desired result, troops forced open their shops and/or welded them shut. Various other tactics were tried during the year with equally little success.

Measures were taken by the Civil Administration to prevent the PLO from injecting funds into the territories in order to fuel the uprising and partially offset the self-inflicted economic hardships that affected all social levels in the territories. In February and March, the amount of money a person could bring in who entered the territories via the Jordan River bridges or an Israeli port of entry was drastically reduced; a permit was required in advance, and routinely refused, for sums exceeding about $1,000. Licensed Palestinian money changers were forbidden to visit Jordan. The authorities at Ben-Gurion International Airport seized $500,000 and opened 46 criminal files against incoming residents of the territories who were found in possession of sums exceeding the permitted amount. Palestinians claimed that the primary sufferers from these blanket sanctions would be, on the one hand, educational, health, and welfare institutions in the territories that received outside funding, and, on the other hand, the many families who were dependent on support from relatives working abroad.

The revenues collected by the Civil Administration from the local population plummeted. This was due primarily to outright refusals to pay taxes, especially VAT, and to the resignation of Palestinians employed in the Civil Administration's tax department, as well as to a ripple effect from the economic slowdown. As a result, essential services were cut and an intensive campaign was launched to offset the budget shortfall by other means. Thus, besides withholding salaries from teachers laid off by the school closures, the Civil Administration made sharp cuts in the health budget. More than 10 percent of all hospital personnel were dismissed, funds for treatment of Palestinians from the territories in Israeli hospitals were slashed by at least 80 percent, and patients admitted to government-run hospitals in the territories for treatment of wounds sustained in disturbances had to pay for three days of hospitalization in advance at about $150 per day. The whole sphere of tax collection in the territories became an arena of battle. With a shortfall of 40 percent in anticipated revenues from taxes in the first half of the year, administrative fiat were introduced to halt the tax revolt. The issuing of essential permits—drivers' licenses, birth certificates, ID cards, export-import licenses, and many others—was made contingent on proof of payment of all outstanding taxes, including income tax, VAT, property tax, municipal tax, and in some cases even traffic tickets. Cars of residents
found to be in arrears to the authorities were impounded at roadblocks; tax-collection sweeps were carried out in which property of persons who could not prove payment of all taxes was confiscated or attached.

The most widely publicized case in this realm was that of Beit Sahour, an affluent town of some 9,000 Christian Arabs near Bethlehem. On July 7, the authorities mounted a large-scale tax-collection raid in the town, where some 300 residents had responded to tax claims by returning their government-issued ID cards to the municipality. A curfew imposed on Beit Sahour during the tax raid was lifted ten days later, shortly after the Association for Civil Rights in Israel informed the Central Command legal adviser that it intended to petition the High Court of Justice against the prolonged closure.

In a letter dated October 24 to the Ramallah-based al-Haq Law in the Service of Man group, which had charged that Israeli tax-collection tactics in the territories were "arbitrary" and "extra-judicial," the Judea and Samaria Region legal adviser, Col. David Yahav, wrote that soldiers accompanied tax collectors "only for security reasons" and that the Beit Sahour curfew had been imposed "only after a riot by the residents took place, for security reasons and to safeguard public order."

In the Gaza Strip a more comprehensive tactic was employed to facilitate control over the population. Beginning on May 10, the Civil Administration in Gaza began replacing the ID cards of some 450,000 adult local residents with new color-coded cards to make identification of the bearer easier at roadblocks or during search operations. The fact that access to Israel would be denied to those without cards guaranteed the success of the operation, since nearly 50 percent of Gaza's working population was employed in Israel, generally in menial labor. However, in order to receive a new card, residents had to pay a fee and show proof of payment of all taxes and other levies, and proof, in the form of a stamped document, that they were not wanted for questioning by the security forces.

One of the harshest punitive economic sanctions applied against the Palestinians in an effort to break the uprising was the issuing of sporadic bans on growing, harvesting, and/or exporting agricultural crops. Also, during prolonged curfews in a number of villages, crops rotted on the ground when residents were denied access to their fields. Most damaging were the measures taken against the West Bank's agricultural mainstay, the olive crop. On a number of occasions, the military uprooted olive trees, usually groves along roadsides which had been giving cover to persons throwing stones or firebombs at Israeli vehicles, or as sheer punishment, notably in the case of Beita, where some seven acres of trees were dug up following the incident there in April (see below). During the olive harvest itself, beginning in October, picking and marketing of the fruit were often prohibited, and olive presses were shut down in various locales, particularly in the Jenin area, following unrest or as a means of coercing villagers to cooperate with the Civil Administration.
FOREST FIRES

If the Israeli authorities uprooted trees, Palestinians burned them. In the period from May to September there were some 1,200 forest and brush fires throughout the country, which ravaged about 38,000 acres of woodlands, fields, and fruit orchards. This was four times the number of fires in 1987. At the height of the summer, the Jewish National Fund, the body responsible for planting and maintaining forests, had to cope with some 50 big fires a week. It was estimated that about half the fires were being deliberately set by hostile arsonists, in the main, Palestinians from the territories, though also some Israeli Arabs, often children—for nationalist reasons. On at least one occasion the United National Command of the Uprising urged the population to torch Israeli targets. Leaflet No. 19 of June 8 designated June 22 as a general-strike day and a “return to the land” on which the soil was to be “enriched and sown” and “enemy industrial and agricultural property is to be destroyed and burned.”

In fact, although this “day of burnings,” as it was dubbed in media headlines, did not produce many fires, it did have the effect of stretching Israeli resources and manpower to the limit. Anticipating intense arson efforts, the army and the police, along with about 1,500 staff and volunteers from the JNF and the Nature Conservation Authority, declared a countrywide alert. Ground and air patrols operated across broad areas. The day’s count was 14 minor fires of which 8 were deliberately set—well below the average (in the week beginning June 12, 132 fires were reported in the country).

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

While the economic damage caused by forest fires was largely indirect and of a long-term character, the cumulative economic consequences of the actions and counteractions taken by the Palestinians and the Israeli authorities were direct and immediate for both Israel (see below) and the territories. Allowing for difficulties in collecting data in the territories, the Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that in 1988 in the West Bank, available per capita private income declined by 16 percent in fixed prices, following an increase of 12 percent in each of the two preceding years. The GNP in the West Bank fell by 12–15 percent after a per annum growth of 8 percent in 1986–1987; the figures for Gaza were substantially the same. Residents of the territories put in about 25 percent fewer workdays, both locally and in Israel, than in 1987. The decline in work hours in Israel was twice as high in industry (35 percent) as it was in agriculture (18 percent). In the West Bank itself, however, work in the agricultural sector increased by some 15 percent, as did agricultural production, reflecting both the drive toward self-sufficiency and sheer necessity. Agricultural production remained stable in the Gaza Strip, where topography and tradition precluded the option of the “return to the land” that existed in Judea and Samaria: fully 96 percent of the Gazans who worked in Israel had no recourse to agriculture.
that could sustain them without work in Israel, while the comparable figure in the West Bank was 68 percent.

Public consumption (the value of the services given by the Civil Administration and the local authorities) decreased by 16 percent in the West Bank, following 9-percent increases in each of the preceding two years, and by 3 percent in Gaza, following an average per annum increase of 11 percent in the previous two years. Likewise, investments in fixed assets fell by about a quarter in the West Bank after an average per annum increase of 15 percent in 1986 and 1987. A particularly steep decline—44 percent—occurred in investments by the Civil Administration and the local authorities (in road building, construction, and equipment), following a 26-percent growth in the previous two years. In the Gaza Strip, investments in fixed assets were off by 13 percent and in public investments by 28 percent. Industrial production in the West Bank dropped by 8 percent, but by 23 percent without the production of olive oil; the Gaza Strip registered a 20-percent fall in industrial production. Construction in the West Bank was down by about 30 percent, following a 12-percent growth in the two preceding years, while in Gaza it fell by 13 percent.

Compounding this already harsh state of affairs was a drastic decline of more than 40 percent in the value of the Jordanian dinar. The overall result was that the standard of living in the occupied territories fell by about a third in the course of a single year.

Terrorism and Vigilantism

Blood feuds and other forms of intracommunal violence were traditional in Palestinian society, and the uprising added to them a new element, political assassination. Primarily, this took the form of attacks against known or suspected "collaborators" with Israel by the "strike forces," the "commando" units of the popular committees, or by entire villages. As the uprising became more institutionalized, such assaults increased in frequency and intensified in brutality. For many Israelis the killings, and especially the savagery which attended them, tended to validate their perception of Arabs in general as violence-prone and confirmed their worst fears of what would be in store if an independent Palestinian state were established on Israel's doorstep.

Of the approximately 20 killings of Palestinians by Palestinians in 1988, virtually all in the West Bank, perhaps the most barbaric was the first, the lynching of a 42-year-old resident of the West Bank village of Kabatiya, Muhammad al-Ayed, said to have sired 15 children by three wives. On February 24, hundreds of villagers surrounded Ayed's home, shouting that he was a traitor and demanding that he come out. Ayed defended himself against the mob with an automatic weapon (issued to him, as to others who worked with the Israeli authorities, by the Shin Bet), killing a 14-year-old boy and wounding 15 other persons before he was seized and his home set ablaze. When Israeli security forces finally reached the scene they found Ayed's
battered body hanging from an electricity pole with a Palestinian flag flying above. In a predawn punitive action the next day, troops and Shin Bet personnel arrested about 100 villagers suspected of participating in the murder and demolished the houses of the two main suspects.

Subsequently, two more houses were blown up and several hundred persons arrested. In an effort to deter more attacks on “collaborators,” the IDF sealed Kabatiya from the outside world for 37 consecutive days, cut off its supplies of water, electricity, and cooking gas, and closed its principal source of revenue, stone quarries. Nevertheless, Israeli journalists who entered the town through back roads reported that morale was high and that the events had intensified the inhabitants’ sense of solidarity. For subsistence they had resorted to the ways of their ancestors, drawing water from wells, using wood for fuel, living off the land, and employing medicinal herbs in the absence of proper medical treatment. They had also smuggled in supplies from nearby villages through the surrounding hills.

On March 2, Leaflet No. 9 of the United National Command of the Uprising congratulated “heroic” Kabatiya for “teaching a lesson to the betrayers of the homeland” and called on all Palestinian employees of the Civil Administration and all Palestinian policemen “to resign immediately and join the popular masses in their heroic struggle.” Five days later a Jericho policeman was murdered near his home, evidently as an example to others. Some 300 policemen in the territories promptly resigned.

The first week of October saw the murder of three more “collaborators,” including Mustafa Abu Bakr, the mukhtar (headman) of the village of Bidya, near Kalkilya, who was suspected by villagers of cooperating with the Israeli authorities and of being involved in land sales to Jewish buyers. Immediately after Bakr’s killing, Bidya was placed under curfew for four days and the army blew up five houses of suspects. An IDF announcement on December 7—see also below—stated that members of a “local terrorist cell” had confessed to the crime. On the day of Bakr’s murder a man from the village of Anin, near Jenin, was shot to death while sitting in a cafe in the Israeli-Arab town of Umm al-Fahm. Residents of Anin celebrated the murder of the “treacherous dog.”

Settlers

The long-term significance of such attacks, the Jerusalem Post’s Yehuda Litani wrote after the Abu Bakr killing, was to “seriously impair Israel’s ability to control the territories through surrogates.” To no one did this development appear more menacing than to the Jewish settlers in the areas, whose sheer physical well-being depended on the Palestinians “knowing their place” as that conception dictated. The two types of Jewish settlers in the territories, those who were driven by a mystical, quasi-messianic yearning for the biblical Land of Israel and those—the overwhelming majority of the Jewish inhabitants of the territories—who had been lured there by government-subsidized housing, now found themselves locked into a true “pio-
neering” situation. The latter were for the most part nonreligious and cared little for abstract ideologies; they wanted only a quiet life in country villas set in tight-knit communities where the air was clean and the streets were safe and the children had space to grow—suburbia in Samaria. As for their indigenous neighbors, the Palestinian Arabs, the settlers were part of a generation of Jews that had become accustomed to looking at Arabs, if at all, as garbage collectors, construction workers, street sweepers, and dishwashers in restaurants. It came as a profound shock to the new suburbanites when these previously invisible Arabs suddenly turned into highly visible “Palestinians” and launched a concerted campaign to drive them out of their newfound Eden.

The ideological settlers of Gush Emunim, on the other hand, tended to view the Arabs as the incarnation of the biblical “Amalek,” the adversary of the Hebrews who was to be expunged from the Land of Israel, or, at best, as bearing the halakhic status of “resident stranger.” They also looked at the unfolding events as fulfilling the Divine Plan, perhaps the onset of the cataclysms traditionally associated with the “birth pangs of the Messiah.” Therefore, taking a millenarian approach, they were able to evince a modicum of forbearance, at least in the early part of the uprising, certain that though their triumph might tarry, it would surely come.

By definition, the nonideological settlers lacked a sustaining vision of this kind. If the IDF, whose manifest task it was to keep the “locals” in place, could not or would not suppress the Arab troublemakers, then the settlers would fend for themselves. The upshot was that, as the intifada intensified, the nonideological settlers (along with the Kahanists of Kiryat Arba, who were beyond the pale even for the other groups) increasingly spearheaded “reprisals,” “patrols,” “vigilante” actions, and other aggressive “self-defense” tactics. Far more frequently than in past years, therefore, Israeli soldiers found themselves having to act as a buffer between enraged settlers and Palestinians. From this point of view, the situation was far more volatile in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip, where fewer than 3,000 Jews, including children, resided in 14 settlements, and “bypass” roads enabled the settlers to reach their homes as though the local population did not exist. In the West Bank, however, many of the roads to Jewish settlements ran next to or through Arab towns and villages, and the potential for confrontation was ever present.

Another factor in the West Bank equation was the O/C Central Command, Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, who was said to be “soft” on Arabs—a reputation he had picked up in 1982, when he objected to IDF actions in Beirut during the Lebanon War. Six years later Mitzna served as a lightning rod for much of the settlers’ wrath at what they believed was the military’s deliberate refusal to stamp out the uprising. In the Gaza Strip, in contrast, the O/C Southern Command, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, a no-nonsense type who could “speak to the Arabs in their own language” and had a well-developed public relations sense to boot, was generally perceived to be the right person in the right place.

Toward the end of January, at the height of the stage of violent mass confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli troops, Yisrael Harel, editor of the settlers’
journal *Nekudah*, told a *Jerusalem Post* reporter: “Everything has been going on during this period like always. . . . We’ve even had Arabs from the area coming to shop for food in our grocery because of the commercial strike which has kept [Arab businesses] shut down. For us, it’s been business as usual.” Yet within two weeks (February 4), a fellow resident of Harel’s from the Gush Emunim settlement of Ofra, Meshulam Moskowitz, a 30-year-old immigrant from Brooklyn, suffered a fractured skull when he was hit by a rock in an ambush at Kafr Malik in Samaria. Four days earlier a 32-year-old Beit El man, Dov Kalmanovich, had suffered severe burns when a firebomb turned his car into a blazing inferno near el-Bireh. The two attacks were part of a pattern of escalating violence against Israeli vehicles in the West Bank.

When settlers warned that they would act on their own if they did not receive more protection, Defense Minister Rabin reiterated his stand that they should take an example from Israel’s northern border settlements and restrain themselves. Rabin said, “It’s impossible to station a soldier to guard every settler.” Taking Rabin at his word, ultranationalist settlers from Hebron and Kiryat Arba, including activists from Meir Kahane’s Kach movement, began operating night patrols in the area between Hebron and Jerusalem, claiming it was their right to employ legitimate self-defense in reaction to stoning or firebomb attacks.

As the settlers became more aggressive, mere rumors of raids by them were sufficient to trigger rioting in towns and villages. On February 4, loudspeakers of mosques in Tulkarm broadcast that Jewish settlers had kidnapped local residents and urged the population to protest. As a result, several thousand persons poured into the streets, erected barricades, burned tires and garbage bins, and attacked an IDF patrol. A 26-year-old local man was shot to death when he attacked an Israeli officer.

On March 22, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Knesset’s Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee that the permission granted soldiers to open fire on Palestinians throwing or apparently about to throw firebombs was valid also for the settlers, but “only in instances of danger to life and as long as that danger lasts.” This further relaxation of the rules for opening fire followed a dramatic escalation in Palestinian violence against Jewish civilians in the territories and retaliations by settlers, on both an individual and an organized basis. According to data of the IDF Spokesman’s Office, the period from February 9 to March 8 saw 2,247 violent incidents (not including firebomb attacks or the use of firearms) perpetrated in the territories against the IDF and Israeli civilians—1,730 in the West Bank and 517 in the Gaza Strip—an average of more than 75 incidents per day, and an increase of nearly 1,000 incidents over the previous month.

While settlers were occasionally questioned following attacks on Arab property—most common were night raids in which Arab-owned vehicles were vandalized, primarily in the Hebron area—investigations were usually perfunctory and charges were rarely pressed. This and a number of serious incidents demonstrated that the “dual system of justice” in the territories, documented earlier in the decade in an
official report by the State Attorney’s Office (the “Karp Report”—see AJYB 1986, pp. 340–341), was still in force. Arabs who stoned Israeli vehicles in and around Jerusalem were theoretically liable for 20 years’ imprisonment under the section of the penal code that was invoked in such cases, and throughout the territories stone-throwers were routinely given up to a year in prison and a stiff fine. Similarly, Arabs throwing firebombs with intent to maim and murder, even if no one was hurt in the attack, usually found themselves serving up to ten years in jail. Release on bail was unheard of.

In contrast, after Pinhas Wallerstein, aged 39, a leading Gush Emunim activist and the head of the Binyamin Regional Council, was detained for questioning on January 11 in connection with the shooting death that day of Rabeh Hussein Ghanem, aged 17, and the wounding of his cousin in the village of Beitin, near the settlement of Ofra, he was released on his own surety of NIS 5,000, apparently following the intervention of one or more cabinet ministers. Wallerstein was eventually charged with manslaughter and aggravated assault, though not before the High Court intervened and the attorney general heard arguments by Wallerstein’s lawyer in a rarely used procedure. On October 11, exactly ten months after the incident, Wallerstein pleaded not guilty, by reason of self-defense, when his trial opened.

On September 30, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, leader of the Jewish community in Hebron and the spearhead of the entire settlement movement in the territories since 1967, was questioned briefly by police following an incident in the center of the city in which a shop owner was shot to death and at least one other person was wounded. Reportedly, when the car in which Levinger was traveling with other members of his family was stoned, he got out of the vehicle and opened fire with his pistol. On November 22, the police recommended that Levinger be charged in connection with the incident, but a week later the State Attorney’s Office returned the file to the police saying that the evidence was insufficient.

In most cases the investigations into such incidents—some 15 Palestinians died at the hands of settlers during the year—either dragged on interminably or were eventually dropped for lack of evidence. The only Jewish civilian in the territories against whom legal proceedings were completed during the year in the wake of a shooting death was Israel Ze’ev, a 37-year-old American-born resident of the Shilo settlement. On May 5, Ze’ev killed a shepherd, Jouda Awad, from the nearby village of Turmus Ayya, and wounded another while they were grazing their flock just outside the settlement. Ze’ev claimed he had acted in self-defense. The investigation revealed that the Palestinians had done nothing to provoke the firing but also that Ze’ev had intended only to scare them off. On December 4, he was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment and two years’ suspended and ordered to pay the victim’s widow NIS 30,000 in compensation. While this was considered a stiff sentence by the settlers, it fell far short of the maximum permitted—the charges were manslaughter and aggravated assault, for which Ze’ev could have received 20 and 6 years, respectively.

Despite the violence in the territories, the number of settlers continued to in-
crease. Although nonsettler Israelis ceased almost entirely to travel to the territories, even to visit relatives and friends, about 1,000 families (4,000 persons) moved to the West Bank and Gaza during the year. While the 6.5-percent population growth was down from the previous year’s 10.7-percent rise—and both of these figures represented major decreases from the early 1980s—the fact that any increase at all was registered in the conditions of 1988 was touted as a major accomplishment by the settlement leadership. At year’s end the Jewish population of the territories stood at about 71,000 (at least half of them children), as compared with at least 1.5 million Arabs.

BEITA INCIDENT

One episode in particular in 1988 demonstrated how swiftly the volcanic passions of both Israelis and Palestinians could be unleashed, and how profound were the mistrust and blinkered perceptions on both sides. One Israeli and two Palestinians were killed in the incident, and three persons, including an Israeli guard, were seriously wounded.

On April 6, during the Passover holiday, a group of 16 teenagers from Elon Moreh, a Gush Emunim settlement in Samaria, set out on a walking hike through the surrounding countryside. The Elon Moreh hikers were accompanied by two armed escorts: Roman Aldoubi, aged 26, the founder of the yeshivah at “Joseph’s Tomb” in Nablus, whose militancy had led to his banishment in 1987 from Nablus for six months under a special—and unprecedented—order of the O/C Central Command; and Menachem Ilan, aged 55, who in 1984 had been convicted of destroying evidence in a fatal shooting incident for which fellow settlement member Yosef Harnoi was sentenced to ten years in prison (see AJYB 1987, p. 311; in December 1988 the Supreme Court rejected Harnoi’s appeal). It was Ilan who “initiated, planned and was responsible for the hike,” according to the official IDF report on the events of that day (issued April 27), written by General Mitzna following the investigation by the police, the IDF, and the Shin Bet.

As the hikers, moving through a wadi, drew near the village of Beita, the loudspeakers of the local mosque blared out a warning of their approach. Villagers later said they thought a party of armed settlers was about to attack them. Stones were thrown at the hikers from a hilltop at a distance of about 100 meters. Aldoubi fired several shots at them with his Uzi submachinegun, and then, as more villagers appeared, he exchanged his weapon for Ilan’s more accurate M-16 rifle and fired a “warning shot . . . at a distance of about 50 meters,” killing Moussa Salah Daoud, aged 20, and wounding another man. Villagers now surrounded the hikers and “forced” them to enter the village, “albeit without employing physical violence.” The hikers formed a protective circle around Aldoubi to prevent villagers from grabbing his rifle.

The situation erupted into what the report called a “mass riot” when Mounira
Daoud, the distraught sister of the dead man and wife of the wounded man, threw a rock that struck Aldoubi in the head. "In an instinctive reaction . . . Aldoubi fired several bullets while turning around"; more shots were fired "during a struggle over Aldoubi's weapon," and the second guard, Menachem Ilan, who had earlier tried to restrain Aldoubi, was knocked senseless. The riot that ensued, in which the hikers were attacked with rocks, clubs, "and anything within reach," ended within a few minutes, and many of the villagers involved in the melee fled into the hills. As the bruised and battered hikers picked themselves up, they saw to their horror that a 15-year-old girl named Tirza Porat, daughter of Rabbi Yosef Porat, a founder of Elon Moreh, had been killed—the first Israeli civilian death of the intifada. A villager, Hatam Ahmed al-Jaber, aged 22, also lay dead. A second villager had been injured, and Aldoubi was unconscious (he had suffered brain damage, and remained in a coma in the hospital following surgery).

The Israeli public in general, and the settlers in particular, were shocked and appalled by the events in Beita. However, the settlers forfeited some sympathy when it emerged that the group had failed to coordinate this hike with the IDF—indeed, it was remarked that parents who sent their children on an outing of this kind seemed willing to put their lives at risk just to prove that Jews could go wherever they pleased in the Land of Israel. Senior officers, including the chief of staff, also let it be known that, contrary to the version of events put out by the hikers, who claimed immediately after the event and in a subsequent press conference that Tirza Porat had been killed either by a rock or by villagers' gunfire, the actual cause of death was a bullet from the rifle of Roman Aldoubi, who had fired wildly when he was struck in the head.

Still, the army's report placed the brunt of the blame squarely on the villagers: "The motivation and aggression evinced by the local Arabs and their readiness to harm a group of Jewish hikers constitute the primary elements in the unfolding of the incident and its tragic ending." The conclusion, together with the atmosphere of hysteria in the settlements, virulent denunciations of senior IDF officers by right-wing politicians, and, as the chief of staff told the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee on April 12, a desire to deter other villages from harassing hikers, evidently constituted the rationale for the unprecedented punitive measures taken against Beita. The village and the surrounding area were declared a closed military zone and sealed off from the outside world for more than three weeks. In Beita a weeklong curfew was imposed. All the males in the village of some 4,200 residents were rounded up and about 60 were taken into custody, while the others were held in a local school for five days. Air Force helicopters were called in to flush out villagers hiding in the surrounding hills, and nearby villages were warned not to shelter the fugitives.

The Beita incident afforded right-wing politicians an opportunity to vent their frustration and rage. Justice and Tourism Minister Avraham Sharir (Likud-Liberal) called for Beita to be razed to the ground. Such sentiments found ready echoes at Tirza Porat's funeral, attended by thousands of settlers as well as the prime minister,
five other cabinet ministers, and many MKs and public figures.

The security forces swiftly acted against villagers suspected of having been involved in the incident. In the two days following the events, the IDF blew up at least 13 houses in the village, including, accidentally, the house of one of the villagers who had come to the hikers' aid (it was announced that he would be compensated). Until this time, the High Court of Justice had consistently refused to intervene in house demolitions, not recognizing this measure as collective punishment. When the Association for Civil Rights in Israel on April 10 petitioned the High Court against further demolitions in Beita, pointing out that the military was acting solely on the basis of one side's version of the events, a panel of three justices engineered a compromise. The IDF agreed to give 48 hours' notice to any family in the village whose house was targeted for demolition so that it could turn to the court. (This applied exclusively to Beita—the army had no obligation to provide advance notification of intent to demolish a house, and in most cases the occupants were allowed a short time to remove personal effects.) One of the first houses to be demolished was that of Mounira Daoud, who had thrown the rock that struck Aldoubi in the head. (Daoud, who was nursing an infant at the time, was arrested and denied bail; on August 11 she was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment, including the four she had already spent in jail awaiting trial. Twenty other Beita residents went on trial in connection with the incident later in the year.)

Other Intifada-Related Violence

Inside Israel, on June 12, three firebombs exploded on the street after being thrown from the roof of the Dizengoff Shopping Center in the heart of Tel Aviv. The incident caused no interruption to the city's booming night life, which was, outwardly at least, unaffected by the uprising.

Elsewhere more vicious methods were employed. On June 20, Eli Cohen, a 33-year-old farmer from Moshav Shekef, in the Lachish district on the Israeli side of the Green Line near Kiryat Gat, died when he was savagely beaten and stabbed while working in his vineyard. When General Mitzna arrived at the settlement, residents lashed out at him, complaining that the army had taken no action despite a series of sabotage attacks on the area. About six weeks later, on August 3, a 69-year-old woman, Rachel Weiss, was found murdered in her home on Moshav Shafir, also in the Lachish district. Three youths from the Jebalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip were arrested in connection with the attack.

The 2 Lachish district residents were among the 16 Israeli Jews who died in Israel and the territories in 1988 in intifada-related violence. (About 400 Jewish civilians, almost all of them settlers, were wounded, a few seriously, in attacks in the territories, the vast majority—370—in the West Bank.) The first Israeli death occurred on March 20 in Bethlehem when a reserve soldier, Moshe Katz, aged 28, was shot twice in the head at close range with a pistol while doing guard duty. On June 2, an 18-year-old yeshivah student, Eliezer Schlesinger, was shot to death while walking
in a Jerusalem park with a fellow student after late-night studies; the assailant, who confessed to the crime, was a teenaged Arab prostitute. On August 15, the battered and partially burned body of Ziva Goldovsky, an 18-year-old high-school senior from Holon and an activist in a Jewish-Arab group who spent much time in the occupied territories, was found near Ramallah. The police arrested a 26-year-old man from el-Bireh with a criminal record, an acquaintance of the dead woman, who confessed to the murder, which he said was committed for “nationalistic” reasons.

In the year’s worst outrage, perpetrated on the evening of October 30 (and which probably influenced the outcome of the Knesset elections, held two days later), several incendiary bombs were thrown into a Tiberias–Jerusalem bus as it passed through Jericho. Four persons died in the ensuing blaze—a Jerusalem woman, Rachel Weiss, and her three children, all under four years old. David Delarosa, a 19-year-old soldier who suffered critical lung damage when he reentered the bus in an effort to rescue Rachel Weiss, died on December 22 in a London hospital, before he could undergo lung-transplant surgery. Five other passengers were hospitalized. Within hours of the attack, three Jericho residents reportedly confessed to the crime. The following day the army blew up seven houses of suspects in Jericho and a nearby village; army bulldozers uprooted scores of fruit-bearing trees on both sides of the road in the vicinity from which the bombs were thrown.

A week after the bus incident, on November 7, a reservist, David Danieli, was stabbed to death while guarding the settlement of Massuah in the Jordan Rift Valley. The assailant was shot to death on the spot by a member of the settlement; his family’s house, near Nablus, was demolished within hours of the murder. Another reservist, Arturo Herstig, aged 42, originally from Argentina, was killed on December 13 in the aftermath of an incident near the Samaria settlement of Har Bracha. A member of the settlement and an Arab shepherd were killed as a result of a quarrel between the two over the ownership of a disputed 300-acre plot of land. Herstig was killed when the army vehicle he was riding in was fired on by the shepherd.

Three Israeli civilians were killed in a terrorist attack of the classic kind, which was indirectly related to the intifada. On March 7, three heavily armed gunmen who had infiltrated across the border with Egypt commandeered a military car from five unarmed IDF officers near Mitzpe Ramon in the Negev. The gunmen broke through a police roadblock at Yeroham and then engaged a pursuing police van in a gun battle along the highway near Dimona, while firing at passing civilian vehicles. Finally, a police bullet hit one of the car’s tires and the terrorists leaped out, just as a bus carrying staff workers to the nearby Nuclear Research Center came on the scene. The driver and most of his passengers managed to escape before the terrorists reached the bus, but some were trapped inside and held hostage. Negotiations began in which the gunmen demanded that Israel release Arab security prisoners. After more than two hours of give-and-take, shots were heard from the bus, and the order was given for the antiterrorist unit of the Border Police to storm the vehicle. The three gunmen, as well as two of the women hostages, were killed in the 30-second
operation. Besides the two women who died—Miriam Ben-Yair, aged 42, mother of three, and Rina Shratzky, aged 30, mother of two—Victor Rahm, aged 38, a widower and father of three whose wife had recently died of cancer, was shot in cold blood by the gunmen.

Responsibility for the attack was claimed by PLO headquarters in Tunisia, which issued a communiqué that the organization's military wing had carried out "the heroic attack against the Zionist atomic scientists at Dimona." Most observers, however, believed the action's true purposes were to sabotage the Shultz peace mission (see below) and to demonstrate that the PLO based outside the territories was also actively involved in the intifada. The raid in fact followed a number of failed attempts by Arafat's Fatah organization to send murder squads into Israel via Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt; a month earlier, another Fatah squad had been captured near Mitzpe Ramon after crossing the Egyptian border. For the PLO, however, the bus outrage proved counterproductive: it enabled Israel to score propaganda points by depicting the PLO as a terrorist organization, and hence the leadership of the uprising, who identified with the PLO, as terrorists by association, with all that this entailed.

Much of the hostile activity in Israel proper was perpetrated by Israeli Arabs. The most serious incident occurred on August 20, when 25 persons were wounded—one seriously, an 8-year-old boy who lost a leg—by a grenade that was thrown on Haifa's pedestrian mall. On December 6, it was announced that 13 Israeli Bedouin from Galilee villages, two of them soldiers, had been arrested and charged with organizing as a Fatah squad to perpetrate a series of terrorist attacks, including the Haifa operation. The group was also alleged to have torched parked buses and thrown incendiary bombs at buses traveling in the area.

The principal venue for such incidents was the Wadi Ara road, a major Galilee artery passing through an area populated almost exclusively by Israeli Arabs. Buses and other vehicles traveling on this highway were frequently attacked with stones or firebombs. Galilee forests were also a favorite target for arsonists, some of them Israeli Arabs. Other areas in which Israeli Arabs evinced solidarity with the intifada and hostility toward the Jewish population were around Mount Tabor and, in the Negev, near the large Bedouin villages and encampments in the Beersheba area. Overall, little physical damage and few injuries resulted from these incidents, which were perpetrated mainly by youths and children.

All told, 1,468 incidents of stone throwing were registered inside the Green Line, along with 169 firebomb attacks, 37 cases in which the Palestinian flag was raised, 94 of "incitement to rebellion," and about 80 cases in which roadblocks were erected. Besides these incidents, the Israel Police counted more than 400 instances of what the security forces termed "hostile terrorist activity" within the Green Line.
Antiterrorist Activity

The Shin Bet, which along with other Israeli security arms had been caught unprepared when the uprising erupted, reportedly improved its intelligence capabilities in the territories by adding a new department for situation appraisals. In the field, at all events, the Shin Bet scored some big successes in uncovering terrorist cells, although, without saying so, the defense establishment broadened the operative definition of "terrorism" to include attacks not only on Jewish civilians but also on other Palestinians and against the military. The weapons that were included under the revised rubric ranged from stones and incendiary bombs to grenades and firearms, but the new classification encompassed also the distribution of leaflets or even the scrawling of nationalist graffiti on walls. Similarly, after the popular committees and other forms of local organization were outlawed, they were added to the traditional list of PLO-affiliated groups who perpetrated "hostile terrorist activity."

Some of the successes involved incidents from the pre-intifada period. In January the security forces announced the capture of a terrorist cell suspected of murdering Yigal Shahaf in Jerusalem in October 1987 (AJYB 1989, p. 377); on February 17, the Lod military court sentenced an unrepentant 50-year-old-man, Wasfi Mansour, from the village of Tira, to life imprisonment for planting a bomb on an interurban bus just over a year previously, which exploded and injured nine persons (AJYB 1989, p. 377); the same sentence was imposed by the same court on May 8 against two Arab residents of the city, Muhammad Ziyada, aged 34, and Mukhias Bourgal, aged 26, for throwing a grenade at a bus on a highway near the city on June 5, 1987, the 20th anniversary of the outbreak of the Six Day War; and on November 1, a military court in the Gaza Strip sentenced a Rafah resident, Fat’hi Zakout, to five life sentences for planting bombs on Israeli buses on a number of occasions in 1987, one of which wounded a driver.

In May a Fatah cell was uncovered in the Gaza Strip while planning a suicide-bombing operation at the Tel Aviv central bus station. A Hebron gang caught in June was accused of employing violence against Palestinians going to work in Israel and against Israeli-appointed village council members. An Israel Police communiqué on June 26 announced the uncovering in Jerusalem of "terrorist cells affiliated with Naif Hawatmeh’s Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and local groups with affiliation with the Islamic Jihad." Those detained were "suspected of having taken part in disturbances in Jerusalem, distributing leaflets, writing slogans [on walls] and of carrying out a series of attacks," including the throwing of a firebomb at the car of Industry Minister Ariel Sharon in the Old City. On August 16, the IDF spokesman announced the uncovering of a number of terrorist squads in the Hebron and Bethlehem areas suspected of belonging to Fatah/Arafat, Fatah/Abu Moussa, and Islamic Jihad. The gangs were accused of carrying out more than 20 attacks dating back to 1980.

One facet of the tight cooperation between the army and the Shin Bet in combat-
ing the uprising consisted of operations undertaken by the army against urban neighborhoods, villages, or refugee camps. The military usually moved in stealthily, in the predawn hours, to gain the element of surprise. Curfew was declared, all the males were ordered to assemble at a central place, house-to-house searches were conducted for suspects and weapons, and local residents were made to remove roadblocks, erase wall graffiti, and take down Palestinian flags from buildings and electricity poles (at least one youth was electrocuted during the year as a result of this practice). Generally, an informer, hooded to prevent identification, accompanied the troops to facilitate their seizure of “wanted” persons, based on lists prepared by the Shin Bet, whose agents were also present.

IDF-initiated operations were increasingly frequent in the second half of the year, after the mass demonstrations had declined. The biggest IDF operation of the kind took place—in the second week of September—in the town of Kalkilya (population 25,000), just across the Green Line from Kfar Sava. General Mitzna admitted that one reason for the big search-and-arrest action was complaints by Jewish settlers, who had to drive through the town to reach their homes, of unremitting harassment by stone-throwing youths. A bypass road was under construction but not yet serviceable, and a night curfew imposed in the two months preceding the operation had proved ineffective. The IDF decided to act. At 4 A.M. on September 6, Kalkilya was placed under total curfew, all roads to the town were blocked, and all phone lines cut off. Hundreds of troops moved in, armed with lists of wanted persons, and conducted house-to-house searches. Dozens of military vehicles took part in the sweep, along with helicopters, to locate suspects who took refuge in the countryside. Some 200 persons were arrested within 48 hours, including members of Hamas, the Gaza-based Islamic Resistance Movement. In the later stages of the operation, which lasted for more than a week (September 6-14), troops escorted personnel from internal revenue and other departments of the Civil Administration who collected overdue taxes, levies, fines, and other monies owed, or confiscated property in lieu of payment.

Some senior military sources professed to see the massive Kalkilya operation (and a parallel thrust in Gaza: see below) as a “turning point” in the IDF’s battle against the uprising. However, no sooner had the curfew been lifted than violence erupted in large parts of the town, and on September 17, at least nine residents were wounded in clashes with troops in demonstrations to mark the sixth anniversary of the Beirut refugee-camp massacre in the Lebanon War.

By no means were all the operations of the security forces massive and overt. Persistent reports in 1988 suggested that in some instances the authorities resorted to “dirty tricks.” One of these was the seizure of cars of local residents, bearing license plates from the territories, to be used, sometimes for an entire day, for a variety of missions before being returned to their owner. The primary reason for this ruse was to enable the security forces to gain unhindered access to locales where Israeli vehicles of any kind would inevitably receive a hostile reception. Israeli and especially foreign journalists complained that undercover agents were also posing
as reporters to enter villages, not only giving the profession a bad name but placing genuine journalists in physical danger from jittery local residents.

Toward the end of the year, as the first anniversary of the uprising approached, preceded by the declaration of “Palestinian statehood” in Algiers in mid-November (see below), the apprehension of terrorist squads seemed to move into high gear. On December 7, two days before the first anniversary of the start of the intifada, the Defense Ministry announced that, during October and November, the security forces had uncovered no fewer than 93 terrorist cells—62 in Judea and Samaria, 27 in the Gaza District, and 4 inside Israel. A total of 610 persons were in custody, 310 in the West Bank, 283 in the Gaza Strip, and 17 in Israel. It was noted that “the large number of arrests was due to the extensive uncovering of ‘popular committees’ and ‘shock units.’”

The Defense Ministry communiqué of December 7 provided a revealing breakdown of the organizational affiliation of the 93 terrorist cells: half of them (47), it turned out, were local, i.e., unaffiliated, and established at the initiative of local activists. In the West Bank, the proportion of local groups was even higher, with 39 of the 62 cells uncovered there falling into that category—while 23 were said to be affiliated with Fatah. Oddly, of the 27 cells uncovered in the Gaza Strip, where Islamic fundamentalism was dominant, fully half (13) were identified with Fatah, and 10 of those were popular committees or shock units. Hamas accounted for five cells, three in Gaza, and Islamic Jihad for another three, of which two were Gaza-based. (Hamas was established shortly after the start of the intifada, utilizing an already existing network of Islamic educational and cultural organizations in the Gaza Strip—which, ironically, had been encouraged to operate by the Israeli authorities in Gaza, as a countermeasure to the PLO. (According to its Covenant, published on August 18, 1988, Hamas was “a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine” and “a link in the chain of jihad [holy war] against the Zionist invasion [of Palestine]”; its goal was “to unfurl the banner of Allah over every centimeter of Palestine.”)

Arguably, the year’s major antiterrorist action occurred far from Israeli shores. On Saturday, April 16, Khalil al-Wazir, better known by his nom de guerre Abu Jihad (“father of the holy war”), was gunned down by unknown assailants in Tunis. As Yasir Arafat’s top lieutenant and as commander of the PLO’s military arm and chairman of its Committee on the Occupied Territories, the 52-year-old Ramle-born al-Wazir was believed to be one of the masterminds of the intifada. His name was also linked with some of the most horrific atrocities perpetrated against Israel in recent years, including the Savoy Hotel attack in 1975, the coastal-road massacre in 1978, and, most recently, the takeover of a bus in the Negev five weeks before his assassination.

Although there was no official reaction of any kind from Jerusalem, observers claimed to detect several indicators possibly implicating Israel. About a week later the Government Press Office temporarily suspended the press credentials of two foreign correspondents, the Israel bureau chiefs of NBC and the Washington Post,
for failing to submit to prior censorship reports about the assassination purporting
to reveal details of how the Israeli politico-defense establishment had planned and
executed the operation. Minister Without Portfolio Ezer Weizman, said to have
voted against the operation, told Israel Army Radio: "If it had been up to me, it
wouldn't have been done." Asked directly whether Israel was responsible for the
assassination, Weizman replied: "Guess for yourself."

The Third Phase—Plastic Bullets and Politics

The major decision-making body dealing with the intifada was neither the cabinet
(which did not hold a single comprehensive discussion on the subject) nor the
General Staff, but an ad hoc group known as the "Territories Forum." Its 30 or so
members, including senior General Staff officers, the military advocate-general and
other legal advisers, the coordinator of activities in the territories, and regional
heads of the Civil Administration, the director of the Shin Bet, a representative of
the Israel Police, and the prime minister's military aide, convened once a week,
usually on Friday, in the office of the defense minister. Defense Minister Rabin paid
regular visits to the territories, had input even in minor decisions, and was the final
arbiter on policy for combating the uprising. The defense minister was dubbed the
"chief of staff" of the intifada—a state of affairs which did not seem to faze Chief
of Staff Dan Shomron, who projected a pronounced sense of distaste for having to
devote so much of his and the army's time to suppressing a civilian uprising.

It was the Territories Forum, presumably, which gave the go-ahead to the use of
plastic bullets in the territories, beginning in the summer. (Except that their heads
were made of hard plastic, these cartridges were identical to conventional ammuni-
tion. However, their muzzle velocity was lower than regular bullets and, while able
to penetrate the body, they lacked the internal spin that was a major cause of serious
injuries and fatalities.) The rationale for the move was explained by Yitzhak Rabin
in a press conference at Beit El military HQ on September 27, some two months
after the new ammunition had become standard issue for troops stationed in the
West Bank and Gaza. "The problem we faced," Rabin said, "arose after it was found
that clubs, tear gas and rubber bullets were inadequate in confrontations with stone
throwers at a distance of 30–50 meters. We had to develop means which would be
effective at this range but which would not have the lethal impact of live fire."

In fact, the number of Palestinian fatalities was reduced, or at least stabilized,
following the introduction of plastic bullets in August; an average of about 20
Palestinians a month died at Israeli hands during the summer and fall months.
However, the number of wounded climbed dramatically, running into hundreds a
month—555 in September, up from 343 in August and 228 in July, according to
official IDF statistics (which related only to gunfire wounds and even then were
incomplete, since many residents chose not to be treated at hospitals to avoid
registration). Many were critically hurt or maimed for life. It was the new ammuni-
tion's capacity to cause injury that had caused the military advocate-general—in his
role as the IDF’s legal adviser—to delay his approval for the use of plastic bullets. Indeed, if fired from too close, or if they hit a vital organ, plastic bullets could kill. Thus, the original orders accompanying their introduction as standard-issue ammunition stated that they could be fired only by an officer who had undergone special training or at his explicit instructions, and then only from a distance of at least 70 meters and only at the legs of perceived agitators.

As the efficacy of the plastic bullets in quelling demonstrations proved itself in the field, these directives were relaxed. The resulting quantum leap in casualties, far from upsetting the defense minister, prompted him to declare, in the press conference already mentioned, that he was “not concerned about the large number of persons who had been wounded, as long as [this occurred] as a result of their active participation in violent actions, whether as organizers, instigators or in the activity itself.”

Others were less sanguine. “We can see no justification for a policy admittedly designed to cause an increase in casualties,” the State Department spokeswoman said in Washington. Closer to home, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel on September 29 asked Attorney General Yitzhak Harish to examine the legality of the defense establishment’s policy regarding the use of plastic bullets. ACRI’s legal adviser told the press that if the new ammunition was being used as a punitive or deterrent measure, such a policy would be “manifestly illegal.” In its letter to the attorney general, the civil rights group recalled that Harish’s intervention earlier in the year regarding the beatings policy had resulted in the chief of staff’s clarifying letter. However, on October 10, Ha’aretz reported that Harish had informed ACRI that “the orders issued to IDF commanders and soldiers [for the use of plastic bullets] underwent my prior examination and were given following my go-ahead.”

On October 8, with the casualty rate in the territories spiraling upward, Rabin asserted: “In every confrontation with rioters we are interested not only in arresting whoever needs to be arrested, but if the violence persists, that they should emerge from it with scars, with casualties. I am the defense minister and I am responsible for the [policy].”

PUNISHMENT OF SOLDIERS

The question of responsibility became an acutely personal one for a few dozen soldiers in 1988. By year’s end, some 45 soldiers and officers had been court-martialed or were facing military trial for offenses ranging from manslaughter and maltreatment of civilians to theft and causing property damage. Another 200–300 soldiers had been tried by their direct superiors in disciplinary hearings for so-called “excesses” or “deviations.” One well-publicized incident occurred on November 20, when a bus carrying paratroopers from a squad commanders’ course, who had just completed a period of service in the territories, was stoned while passing the Kalandia refugee camp north of Jerusalem. While pursuing the perpetrators, who
slipped away, the paratroopers smashed car windshields and windows, vandalized property, entered houses, and reportedly also beat up some of the occupants. Five days later all those who took part in the incident were sentenced to 20 days' detention.

Asked about the event in a radio interview, the chief of staff said that these were "our finest youth" and that they had "gone a little too far" while giving chase—in itself, a laudable initiative. Backing him up, Defense Minister Rabin wrote to the worried parents of one of the paratroopers who had contacted him about the incident. In his reply, made public on November 29, evoking "the values which have always characterized the IDF in its combat missions," Rabin explained that "your son, together with his comrades, deviated from the norms of behavior that we demand from those in uniform" and was therefore punished. However, "this does not mean that your son is unworthy to hold a command post in the IDF. . . . I am certain that the unfortunate incident will not adversely affect your son's continued military service, and that after justice has been done and the punishment completed, things will return to normal."

The decision to make Rabin's letter public spoke volumes. At the same time, his and Shomron's implicit sanctioning of the paratroopers' action as a youthful letting off of steam may help account for the fact that, despite a growing number of reports about "irregularities," no officer holding a rank higher than captain was brought to trial. In addition, the military advocate-general, Brig. Gen. Strashnow, was said to be under pressure from his superiors to avoid court-martialing senior officers. Thus, in the case of "Colonel G.," as he was dubbed in the press, a brigade commander who had allegedly opened fire from a range of 200 meters at fleeing West Bank demonstrators after giving pursuit in a helicopter, killing a villager of Bani Na'im, near Hebron, Strashnow decided—following consultations with Defense Minister Rabin and others—not to court-martial the colonel for manslaughter. Instead, he was brought before the deputy chief of staff in a disciplinary proceeding, given a severe reprimand, and removed from his post. (He subsequently left army service.)

Some cases involving deaths of Palestinians began to reach the trial stage toward the end of the year, following lengthy Military Police investigations. The harshest sentence handed down in 1988 was against Private Eli Yedidya, who received 21 months' imprisonment and 24 months' suspended for killing a resident of Bidu village, near Ramallah, in a March incident. The court found that Yedidya had shot the victim in the head with a rubber bullet at a range of 20 centimeters, and that he had also perjured himself and suborned witnesses.

The most widely publicized case was that of four soldiers—a master sergeant and three privates—from the Givati infantry brigade, who went on trial for manslaughter in September. The charge sheet stated that on August 22, after stones were thrown at them in Gaza's Jebalya refugee camp, they forced their way into the home of the al-Shami family and brutally beat the father, Hani al-Shami, aged 41, a suspect, using rifle butts and a broom stick; they also kicked him and jumped on him from a bed. The victim died a few hours later at the Jebalya army base of internal wounds and massive hemorrhaging. In their defense, the four said that they
had beaten the man because they were "uptight" and "to let off steam" after the stones were thrown. They also claimed that they had acted in accordance with explicit standing orders to beat suspects before detaining them "so the Arabs will learn not to riot." On December 8, after a pathologist testified that in his opinion the beating administered by the Givati soldiers had left the victim "half-dead" but that the fatal blows had been delivered at the Jebalya base, the four soldiers were released from custody, although the court recommended that they not be permitted to rejoin their unit "until the military court decides on the charge attributed to them."

At year's end (December 1), the military advocate-general, addressing cadets in an officers' course, found it necessary to remind them that soldiers were duty-bound not to obey a "manifestly illegal order," such as an order to beat innocent persons or to perform any action contravening fundamental moral values. General Strashnow said that no illegality attached to the current orders about when it was permissible to open fire or to strike demonstrators. "It is permitted to fire in order to kill during battle, but once the battle ends, wounded and prisoners must not be harmed," he explained. However, because the fight to suppress the intifada was by definition not a "battle" in the conventional sense, the IDF found itself in uncharted gray areas in which actions once considered "aberrations" gradually became the norm, and what seemed to be purely military operations ineluctably had political ramifications.

Thus, when Defense Minister Rabin was asked, in an interview with Israel TV's Arabic Service in December, on the eve of the first anniversary of the uprising, for his "interim assessment" of what the interviewer chose to call "the disturbances in the territories," three of the points he made were of a political nature. First, in an apparent turnaround from Jerusalem's long-standing official line that the Arab-Israeli conflict involved only the Arab states, and that the Palestinian issue was not the "heart of the conflict," Rabin acknowledged that in the 1980s, and more specifically in the aftermath of the peace treaty with Egypt and the Lebanon War, the conflict had become, essentially, a "Palestinian-Israeli confrontation." The Palestinians, by employing "civilian violence"—Rabin, again in contrast to Shamir, drew a distinction between this phase of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle and an earlier stage of "terrorism in the territories"—had once more placed the Palestinian issue high on the international agenda.

Second, the Palestinians were able to gain sympathy for their cause "because the Western democracies do not like to see clashes between women and children—civilians—and an army." Beyond these general outcomes of the first year of the uprising, Rabin pointed to a third, more concrete result. The Palestinians, he said, had succeeded in "forcing Jordan's hand." Their actions, combined with the failure of the U.S. diplomatic initiative, had brought about Amman's decision to disengage from the territories, thereby shifting the political spotlight to the PLO. Had Rabin been interviewed a week later he might have cited as perhaps the major achievement, however indirect, of the intifada, the U.S. decision to enter into a dialogue with the PLO in the wake of declarations made by Yasir Arafat (see below).
The Peace Process

The initiative of U.S. secretary of state George Shultz, which played itself out in the first half of the year, from late February until early June, was at least in part the victim of bad timing. As it happened, 1988 was an election year in both Israel and the United States, so that the secretary of state was perceived to represent a lame-duck administration, while the Israeli prime minister was less inclined than ever to budge from his status-quo politics. The basic problem, though, was that by the time the Shultz initiative got off the ground, it was an anachronism.

Shultz addressed himself to the pre-intifada situation; by February 1988 the territories had undergone a sea change. Shultz came to Israel at the height of the mass violence of the uprising's first phase, and his presence seemed only to intensify that violence. On the day of his arrival, February 25, three Palestinians were killed by IDF gunfire in clashes and at least ten wounded, the territories observed a complete general strike, the military began its punitive reprisals in Kabatiya, where villagers had lynched the local headman for "collaborating" with the security forces, and CBS-TV screened its report of Israeli soldiers brutalizing two hapless prisoners. The United National Command of the Uprising called for protest demonstrations against Shultz, and public figures in the territories refused to meet with him, saying that to do so would undercut the standing of the command.

The Israeli political establishment showed no sign of altering its views. Its right wing in particular seized on every negative security development, and the intifada was such a development par excellence, to dig in more deeply. An exchange of letters between Shultz and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in mid-January had left the U.S. official in no doubt about what Shamir thought concerning key elements of his plan. These included the concept of "peace for territory," which, although it derived from UN Security Council Resolution 242, formally endorsed by Israel at the time of its passage in 1967, again in Resolution 338 of 1973, and a third time in the Camp David accords of 1978, was anathema to the entire Israeli Right-religious bloc; the idea of an "international opening" prior to direct talks between the sides, which Shamir had been fighting bitterly ever since the notion was advanced by Labor party leader and foreign minister Shimon Peres as the only means of bringing King Hussein to the negotiating table; and a new feature, the "telescoping" of the Camp David process from five years to nine months.

Furthermore, the atmosphere of mutual suspicion and mistrust that prevailed in Jerusalem was not conducive to a political breakthrough. Following talks held in Israel by U.S. assistant secretary of state Richard Murphy prior to Shultz's arrival, Shamir accused Peres, without naming him, of "run[ning] every day and every minute to the other side [i.e., the Americans] and say[ing]: 'Don't listen to what Shamir says, I'll sell it to you cheaper!'

Nevertheless, upon his arrival in Israel—the first of four visits in 1988, each shorter than the last—Shultz exuded optimism, declaring that he had drafted a "workable plan" toward a settlement and adding: "If we can work together with
commitment and determination, we can make 1988 a year of peace in the region.” Shultz’s first meeting with Shamir (February 26) demonstrated how far apart the two were. The Israeli leader again rejected the “peace for territory” principle which underlay the entire Shultz plan. Instead, he tried to sell the secretary of state the notion, concocted by the premier’s aides and floated in the Israeli press, that Israel had already fulfilled the relevant article of Resolution 242 when it returned the Sinai, which constituted more than 90 percent of the territories captured in 1967, to Egypt. It followed, according to this logic, that the solution in the West Bank should not and could not be “territorial” but must be “administrative,” meaning the “autonomy” regime stipulated in Camp David. Shamir also said no to the idea of an “interlock” between negotiations on an interim agreement and the start of the talks on the final status of the occupied territories, this as part of the “telescoping” process.

Besides Israel, the secretary of state’s energetic pursuit of his mission took him, in the course of nine days, to Egypt, Jordan, Syria, London (where he met with King Hussein on March 1), Brussels (for consultations with President Reagan on March 2), London again, and then back for a second visit to Israel, Syria, and Egypt, all on March 4, where he formally presented his plan in writing to each country’s leadership before leaving the region.

THE SHULTZ PLAN

Two days later the mass-circulation Yediot Aharonot published on its front page a photostat of Shultz’s letter to Shamir. The document summarized in some detail the “statement of understandings” that had emerged from the talks Shultz held with “regional leaders” in order “to achieve the prompt opening of negotiations.” The “agreed objective” of such talks was “a comprehensive peace providing for the security of all the States in the region and for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” (a concept Israel had accepted in the Camp David accords). Negotiations were to commence at “an early date”—May 1 was specified—between Israel “and each of its neighbors which is willing to do so.” The parties to each set of bilateral talks “will determine the procedure and agenda of their negotiation.” In an apparent endeavor to reassure King Hussein that the United States adhered to the “peace for territory” principle implicit in Resolutions 242 and 338, Shultz emphasized that each bilateral negotiation would be based on those two resolutions “in all their parts.” This was reiterated in the context of the negotiations between Israel and “the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation,” which, the letter said, “will be based on all the provisions and principles of . . . Resolution 242.”

Shultz proposed that the first stage of the crucial Israeli–Jordanian/Palestinian negotiations last no longer than six months and that they should produce “arrangements for a transitional period.” Then,

[s]even months after transitional negotiations begin [i.e., on December 1], final status negotiations will begin, with the objective of completing them within one
year. . . . Final status talks will begin before the transitional period begins. The transitional period will begin three months after the conclusion of the transitional arrangement and will last for three years. The United States will participate in both negotiations and will promote their rapid conclusion.

The letter made it plain that Shamir had failed to bring Shultz around to his view that an international conference constituted a threat to Israel; instead, clearly the secretary of state had been persuaded, whether by his Arab interlocutors or in recent talks with his Soviet counterpart, to overcome his reluctance to bringing the Soviet Union into the Middle East peace process. Thus, two weeks before the start of the negotiating process—i.e., on April 15, in just six weeks’ time—an “international conference” was to be convened. The mechanics were simple: the UN secretary-general would issue invitations “to the parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict” and to the permanent members of the Security Council. All the participants would have to declare their acceptance of 242 and 338 “and renounce violence and terrorism”—a sop to Israel and an attempt to force the PLO’s hand. Another Israeli fear was addressed when Shultz wrote that, while the sides could “refer reports on the status of their negotiations to the conference [forum] in a manner to be agreed,” that forum “will not be able to impose solutions or veto agreements reached.”

Shultz’s explicit assertion that “[t]his statement of understandings is an integral whole” pulled the rug from under Shamir’s contention that modifications were still possible. Shultz also stated that he “look[ed] forward to the letter of reply of the Government of Israel in confirmation of this statement”—by March 15, according to press reports. The pressure on Israel was heightened because Shamir was scheduled to leave on March 13 for a weeklong visit to the United States, including a meeting with President Reagan. On March 9, Shamir offered the reply of his wing of the “unity” government. Addressing the Likud Knesset caucus, the prime minister blasted the Shultz initiative, listing what he called “the sins of the American capitulation,” above all Washington’s “surrender” to the riots in the territories as viewed through the distorting prism of international public opinion. Earlier that day, in a meeting of the inner cabinet, the country’s senior policy-making forum, Shamir had rebuffed the demand of the body’s Labor ministers, supported by Housing Minister David Levy, of Herut, that the Shultz document be put to a vote so that Shamir could speak “with one voice” during his U.S. visit and prevent a crisis in relations with that country.

On March 11, Ha’aretz quoted Shamir as telling the country’s leading political columnist, Yoel Marcus: “The only word I accept in the Shultz document is his signature.” Israel’s safety and security were not ensured in the plan, Shamir said, and the “whole thing [was] an attempt to placate the Arabs.” More substantively, Shamir complained that the wording of Shultz’s letter left the way open for the UN secretary-general to invite the PLO to the international conference; that Israel’s right to exist was nowhere mentioned; and that nothing was said about “direct” negotiations.

At the cabinet meeting on March 13, in which Defense Minister Rabin informed the ministers that the situation in the territories would require army reservists to
serve more days and necessitate an increase in the defense budget, Prime Minister Shamir gave each minister ten minutes to speak his piece about the Shultz plan and again declined to put it to a vote. Following the meeting, Foreign Minister Peres sent Shamir a letter, on behalf of the Alignment ministers, asserting that it was "essential" for Israel to accept the Shultz initiative at this "critical" stage in the peace process. Peres said that Shamir's refusal to call for a vote on the Shultz plan had created an "unconscionable situation" and that "in the absence of an Inner Cabinet decision, your stands on the issue of the Shultz initiative do not represent the position of the government of Israel." In his reply, Shamir said he intended to seek "further clarifications" from President Reagan and Secretary Shultz, and pledged that "proximate to my return I will bring the issue without delay for a decision by the Inner Cabinet or the Cabinet plenum..." 

With talk rampant of a looming government crisis and possible early elections, something of the polarization in the country was indicated by two big demonstrations, each of which drew tens of thousands of participants, held in Tel Aviv on successive nights. On March 12, a rally organized by Peace Now called for "a change of direction" and urged Shamir to say "yes to peace," while 24 hours later, in the same plaza, a rally sponsored by Gush Emunim and the political Right urged Shamir to stand firm and tell the American people that "we do not want to commit suicide."

In the United States, Shamir was able to reiterate his objections to the Shultz plan in his talks with both Reagan and Shultz—emphasizing, pointedly, that the international conference element would automatically give both the Soviet Union and Communist China a voice in the proceedings—but finally left matters hanging in the air by not actually rejecting the initiative. Shamir also complained that it was unfair to ask Israel to respond first, when not a single Arab state had replied to the Shultz letter. Speaking to reporters after his meeting with Shamir (March 16), President Reagan indirectly revealed something of the Israeli premier's arguments when he stated: "The U.S. will not slice this initiative apart and will not abandon it." With Shamir standing beside him, the president added, tellingly: "And those who say no to the plan—and the prime minister has not used this word—need not answer to us. They need to answer to themselves and their people as to why they turned down a realistic and sensible plan to achieve negotiations."

Observers described Shamir's talks in Washington (March 14-17) as "inconclusive." In terms of the Shultz initiative this was so. But for Shamir's purposes the very inconclusiveness of the talks demonstrated conclusively that, despite everything, the widely anticipated—and by no one more than Shimon Peres—crisis in Israeli-U.S. relations had been averted. Moreover, the administration's unwillingness, for whatever reason, to push Shamir to the wall meant, as the Israeli premier well knew, the conclusive end of the Shultz initiative in all but name. Thus Shamir was able to deflate the opposition at home by announcing the simple truth. "Nobody has imposed anything on us, including a timetable," he declared triumphantly on his arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport on March 22.

At the inner cabinet meeting the following day, instead of holding a vote on the
Shultz plan "without delay" upon his return, as he had pledged to Peres, Shamir had little trouble persuading the ministers that it was in Israel's best interest to wait until Shultz returned to the region and could inform Israel whether either the Arabs or the Soviets accepted his plan. In fact, Shamir told a meeting of Likud ministers, Shultz had personally assured him that "as long as I am secretary of state, we will not drag you by force into an international conference." As for Shimon Peres, he was in a bind: if he submitted a formal motion for a vote, the certain result would be a stalemate (the inner cabinet consisted of five Likud and five Alignment ministers) which, under cabinet rules, would mean the motion's defeat, a consummation not devoutly wished by the Labor party chairman. Again, the structure of the national unity government had proved that it was the ideal instrument for standing pat.

The full dimensions of the chasm separating Shultz and Shamir were exposed when the prime minister, in a rare Knesset appearance (March 28), revealed the principles he had put forward in Washington. Most striking was the disparity between Shultz's vision of a comprehensive regional settlement, including "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" and Shamir's version of the declared goal: "a peace treaty with Jordan, and the settlement of the problems of the Arabs in Eretz Israel." In line with this approach, Shamir asserted that the Palestinians in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation "must be acceptable to the parties to the negotiations," meaning that Israel reserved the right to veto anyone considered to be associated with the PLO. Instead of an "international event," the most Shamir would accept was the "symbolic presence of the two superpowers at the opening of direct peace negotiations between the sides," an idea first broached by Shultz himself the previous October. Shamir then played his unvarying trump card. In Washington, he said, both the president and the secretary of state had stressed that the Israeli-U.S. alliance was "unshakable, even if we have differences over how to promote the peace process."

In his speech Shamir referred to one of those "differences" when he remarked on a meeting Shultz had held in Washington on March 26 with two prominent Palestinian Americans, Professors Edward Said and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, both members of the Palestine National Council (the PLO's "parliament"). Shamir told the House that Israel would never conduct negotiations, "direct or indirect," with the PLO, and that "we take a grave view of American attempts to establish contacts with PLO members," including PNC delegates. If Shamir thought that the Shultz meeting indicated an evolving shift in U.S. policy and portended further developments in the same direction should the Shultz mission fail, he kept his apprehensions to himself. Indeed, Shultz's move and others like it in the international community played into Shamir's hands by enabling him to depict Israel as under threat from all quarters. Speaking to the Likud Knesset caucus, he warned that a "web of conspiracy" was being woven around Israel and "campaigns" were afoot which aimed to "dwarf" Israel and reduce it to "dimensions which would make its existence impossible."
Shultz himself was at extraordinary pains to deny that his plan was detrimental to Israel's security. Shortly after his arrival in Israel on April 3 to resume his mission, he addressed the editors of the Israeli press and told them that he accepted Shimon Peres's three “noes”—no to a Palestinian state, no to the PLO, and no to a return to the 1967 lines. (The first two positions were unacceptable to the Palestinians and the third, by leaving open the option of returning some land, was unacceptable to Shamir.) Shultz did nothing to ingratiate himself with the Shamir camp when, in an unprecedented step by a serving secretary of state, he took his case directly “to the Israeli people” by granting Israel TV two exclusive interviews within four days: one on the nightly news and the second on the prestigious weekly “Moked” (Focus) interview program. Although Shultz's performance had no perceptible impact, Shamir and his aides railed at Israel TV for “placing the screen at Shultz's disposal so he could make his pitch to the nation over the head of the prime minister.”

Beyond Shultz's ability to make headway in Jerusalem, his failure to achieve progress in his talks with King Hussein in Amman and Hafez al-Assad in Syria contributed to the gathering sense of gloom about the fate of the initiative. A public statement of support for the plan from the vacillating Jordanian monarch was considered essential to swing public opinion in Israel. But Shultz left the region on April 7 in the same state as he had a month earlier. The traumatic Beita incident, which occurred the day before his departure, was not likely to induce flexibility among Israelis (see above).

In the meantime, Prime Minister Shamir was able to take advantage of the situation to persuade his erstwhile Herut ally, MK Moshe Arens, who had resigned from the cabinet to protest against the decision to scrap the Lavi aircraft project (AJYB 1989, pp. 394–396), to rejoin that body. Shamir, asserting that Arens's “skills and experience” were essential at this parlous juncture, thus bolstered his strength in the party with a view to the intraparty election of Knesset candidates, while Arens, as a minister, would be better placed to secure a higher ranking on the party's list. To maintain the sacred balance of the unity government, Shimon Peres approached Mordechai Gur, a former health minister, who had refused to serve under Shamir because of the latter's part in the No. 300 bus affair, with the same offer. Peres noted that Gur's “military experience”—he was a former chief of staff—was essential at this perilous moment, and Gur, like Arens, evidently decided that he had proved his point and that there was no reason to cut off his nose to spite his face. On April 18, following Knesset approval of a cabinet resolution of April 10, Arens and Gur became ministers without portfolio.

**SHULTZ'S LAST TRIP**

Such moves showed that the Israeli political level was already preoccupied with the looming election campaign. So it was not unexpected that Shultz's fourth—and
last, as it turned out—visit to the region to promote his initiative was as unfruitful as the previous three. His arrival in Israel on June 5 for seven hours of talks, after already having met with the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, triggered a three-day general strike in the occupied territories, motivated in part by the fact that June 5 was the 21st anniversary of the Six Day War.

Shultz arrived in the region after attending the Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting in Moscow, but speculation that the superpowers had reached an understanding on the Middle East quickly proved unfounded. Shultz devoted a good deal of time during his one-day visit to Israel, notably almost the whole of his meeting with Defense Minister Rabin, to the issue of human rights in the territories. Accompanying Shultz this time was Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Richard Schifter, who, in the company of U.S. ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, toured the territories on June 6, after Shultz had left, hosted by the Coordinator of Government Activities Shmuel Goren. The Americans expressed special interest in judicial matters, arrest procedures, the imposition of curfew, and the use of tear gas. Shultz himself, before departing, reaffirmed in strong language Washington's long-standing position that Israel's "continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the frustration of Palestinian rights is a dead-end street. The belief that this can continue is an illusion."

Yet by the terms of that very analysis, Shultz's peace plan was equally illusory. By relegating the Palestinians in the territories to a secondary role and continuing to exclude the PLO, Shultz ignored the very forces that had impelled his initiative. The inevitable demise of the Shultz initiative left the way clear for those forces to set in motion the series of events that culminated in the PLO's proclamation of the "State of Palestine" and, a month later, the U.S. decision to enter into a dialogue with the PLO.

A hint of the PLO's modified position surfaced at the Arab summit meeting in Algiers, which convened in June immediately after Shultz's departure from the region. As expected, the summit reaffirmed that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, that as such it should participate as an equal in an international peace conference, and that the Palestinians had the right to establish an independent state. At the meeting, PLO representatives circulated copies of an article, originally published in the London-based *Middle East Mirror*, by the organization's spokesman and close adviser to Arafat, Bassam Abu Sherif. Sherif's article seemed to signal a radical PLO departure by calling for direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians in order to achieve a two-state solution. While Arafat, as usual, neither endorsed nor refuted the article, it was clear that it could not have been published without his approval.

U.S. assistant secretary of state Richard Murphy termed it "a contribution to a rational discussion of the problem," but in the recurring pattern of recent years, PLO hard-liners joined Israeli leaders in rejecting Sherif's ideas, the former because they were "deviationist" and the latter, including Shimon Peres, who was locked into a commitment to the Jordanian option, as an empty public-relations gimmick
whose sole purpose was to secure U.S. recognition of the PLO. (In February Abu Sherif had been involved in the PLO's attempt to send a so-called "ship of return" carrying more than 100 Palestinians deported from the territories and a large contingent of journalists to Israel. The voyage, with its obvious evocation of the Jewish refugee ship *Exodus*, was intended to capitalize on the international sympathy for the Palestinians generated by the *intifada*. Jerusalem shrugged off the plan as a "propaganda stunt" but was sufficiently concerned to set up a ministerial committee to monitor the situation. In the event, an explosion that ripped through the vessel that had been chartered for the voyage, docked at Limassol, Cyprus, on February 15, a day after three senior PLO officials were killed in a car-bomb blast in the same city, persuaded the PLO to postpone the sailing. Both attacks were widely attributed to Israeli secret agents.)

HUSSEIN'S MOVE

Unexpectedly, it was the vacillating King Hussein who dropped the next bombshell. Taking his cue from the situation in the territories, the resolutions of the Arab summit, and emerging changes in the PLO, as indicated by Abu Sherif's article, Hussein went on Jordanian TV and radio on July 31 and announced that Jordan was disengaging from the West Bank and renouncing its claims to that territory. Amman's links with the area, both legal and administrative, were to be severed. Hussein had already canceled an ongoing five-year development scheme for the region and dissolved Jordan's lower house of Parliament, where half the members represented West Bank locales. As Prime Minister Shamir pointed out in a television interview the following day, Hussein's move "actually confirms the situation in the field—a situation in which the King of Jordan has no influence on developments" in the territories. More questionable was Shamir's standard conclusion—that "this step essentially changes nothing"—although this stance did enable him to reject demands by ultranationalist circles to take advantage of Hussein's move and annex the territories.

For the Palestinians in the territories, dependent on Jordan for key services (including international travel documents), and in thousands of cases for salaries, the move could hardly be said to have "changed nothing." On August 4, Amman decided to dismiss the more than 20,000 civil servants in the territories who were still on its payroll and to cease paying their salaries, which totaled some $40 million per year. This would clearly exacerbate the depressed economic situation in the areas and indirectly affect the Civil Administration, which relied on taxes collected from the inhabitants to maintain the civilian aspects of the occupation. Above all, however, Hussein's actions threw the ball squarely into the PLO court. That organization would henceforth be called upon to demonstrate that its designation by the Arab world as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" was more than just words. In the meantime, Leaflet No. 23 of the United National
Command of the Uprising, issued on August 5, hailed Jordan's disengagement as "one of the most important achievements" of the uprising.

"STATE OF PALESTINE" PROCLAIMED

With the political field left completely to the PLO, all eyes were on Arafat, to see if he would articulate the words necessary to fulfill the conditions for American recognition. In mid-September he spoke about accepting Resolution 242 in a speech to the European Parliament at Strasbourg, but ambivalently, and this was deemed to be insufficient by Peres and Shultz when they met in New York later that month to attend the UN General Assembly session. On September 28, a trilateral meeting took place in New York between Peres, U.S. president Reagan, and Egyptian foreign minister Esmat Abdel Meguid. They agreed that, in the pursuit of peace, Egypt's role should be to "encourage the Palestinians to adopt reasonable positions," while Israel should "find a way to reach out to the Palestinians."

In the event, the next development was that Palestinians reached out to other Palestinians. On November 15, with the Israeli political establishment mired deep in a coalition tangle following another inconclusive general election, the 19th Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers, proclaimed the independent "State of Palestine," albeit without defining its exact boundaries, and declared that it supported the holding of an international conference "on the basis of Security Council [Resolutions] 242 and 338." This, together with the PNC's 40-year-late endorsement in its "Declaration of Independence" of General Assembly Resolution 181 of November 29, 1947, which partitioned Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, led the White House to speak of "positive elements" at the PNC meeting but to reject the declaration of statehood due to Washington's opposition to "unilateral action[s]" which "purport to change the status of the occupied territories" without "direct negotiations."

Like Jordan's disengagement and the American readiness to talk to the PLO, the PNC move undermined ingrained Israeli assumptions about the Palestinians. In the territories, the military, not knowing what to expect, braced for the worst. On November 11, the IDF declared a total curfew "until further notice" on the Gaza Strip; lifted only five days later, it was the longest curfew on such a large population since 1967. In addition, all telephone lines to the territories were cut (with the exception of hospitals and elements connected with the Military Government), Arabs were barred from entering or leaving Jerusalem, hundreds of persons were placed under preventive detention, and roadblocks were set up throughout the areas as troops were rushed in on a massive scale. Nablus, the hotbed of Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank, was declared a closed military zone and placed off-limits to reporters. The curfew declared in Kalkilya, Tulkarm, the Balata refugee camp near Nablus, and elsewhere was utilized by the IDF to force residents to remove Palestinian flags and paint over nationalist graffiti. Helicopters and light
planes flew reconnaissance missions over the territories. Nevertheless, at least four persons from two Gaza refugee camps were wounded by IDF gunfire on November 13, when residents defied the curfew and clashed with the army, and in the West Bank, one man was killed and a number of West Bank inhabitants were wounded in confrontations with soldiers.

On November 14, the announced date of the declaration of Palestinian statehood (the proclamation finally came after midnight, on the 15th), Yitzhak Shamir was chosen to form the new government; he stated that his government would make a "tremendous effort" to advance the peace process with the Arab states, thus continuing to ignore the Palestinians. The IDF announced that 19 terrorist cells had been uncovered in the West Bank and Jerusalem and that the houses of some of the suspects had already been demolished. In the Gaza Strip, one person was killed and a number wounded by gunfire and beatings in widespread clashes which erupted despite the curfew. Defense Minister Rabin toured the West Bank where four persons were wounded by IDF gunfire and a firebomb was thrown into an Israeli bus en route to the settlement of Shilo (alert passengers put it out with a fire extinguisher). Rabin told reporters that troop reinforcements had been brought in to suppress "any attempt to violate law and order" in the territories and would "employ every means to achieve that goal." He was probably reacting to a leaflet of the United National Command of the Uprising urging the population to celebrate statehood at 4 p.m. on November 15th by holding parades, singing the "national anthem" "Biladi, Biladi" ("My Country, My Country"), and hoisting Palestinian flags.

As a result of Rabin's measures, a million persons found themselves under curfew in the West Bank and Gaza, army patrols were beefed up with half-tracks (there were more troops in the areas than at any time since the immediate aftermath of the Six Day War), journalists were barred from entering the territories, the distribution of newspapers was banned, and, in a new twist, despite the bitter cold, the authorities cut off the power supply throughout the Gaza Strip and in most areas of the West Bank, including the entire cities of Nablus, Hebron, and Tulkarm and their adjacent refugee camps—thus to prevent inhabitants from viewing TV reports of the proceedings in Algiers. (No attempt was made to confiscate batteries to preclude the use of transistor radios.)

As it happened, at the defense minister's "request," Israelis too were permitted to see only a truncated report of the final PNC session and Arafat's concluding speech. The director-general of the State Broadcasting Authority, Uri Porat, a hard-line Likud appointee, explained that Rabin had "suggested" that coverage be muted after hearing IDF officers in the West Bank express their fear that televised reports of the Declaration of Independence ceremony from Algiers would inflame passions in the territories. (Porat made no reference to the fact that without electricity the Palestinians in the territories could not view the newscast in any case. He did, however, voice his concern that Israeli Arabs were liable to be influenced by Arafat's words.) Porat added a number of other restrictions on the news depart-
ment's coverage of the Algiers meeting: reporters were not to say "Palestinian state" but "PLO state," the "PLO anthem" was not to be broadcast, speeches from the PNC session were to be paraphrased in the studio and not screened, and no expert commentators were to be brought in to analyze the events.

The massive IDF presence in the territories did its work, and although some 14 persons were wounded in incidents on November 15, the day passed relatively quietly. West Bank youths made a few feeble attempts to "celebrate" their "independence" in defiance of the curfew by scrawling a few slogans on walls, igniting fireworks, or floating balloons in the Palestinian colors, and elite IDF units chased children who lit firecrackers or sent aloft balloons. The IDF command in Gaza put out a leaflet prohibiting singing, dancing, or the use of noisemakers.

In Jerusalem the Foreign Ministry put out an official statement that accused the PLO of resorting to its traditional "ambiguity and double talk" in order "to obscure its advocacy of violence and terrorism." Prime Minister Shamir termed the PNC decisions "a deceptive propaganda exercise" with "no relevance to reality," and the cabinet, on November 20, called them "an additional attempt at disinformation [and] a jumble of illusions meant to mislead world public opinion."

Some opinion in Israel was shifting in response to events. The mainstream Peace Now organization, which had assiduously refrained from urging a dialogue with the PLO, now declared in newspaper ads that in Algiers the PLO had "forsaken the road of rejectionism and the Palestinian Covenant and embarked on the path of political compromise." The group called on the government to broaden "the opening to peace" and, explicitly, "to talk to the PLO." On November 30, hundreds of persons attended a public meeting in Jerusalem sponsored by Peace Now under the previously inconceivable slogan: "Talk peace with the PLO now." (On June 30, four peace activists who had met with PLO officials in Romania in November 1986 [AJYB 1988, p. 377] were sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a year suspended and fined NIS 3,000 each, for violating a controversial 1986 amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance prohibiting contact with members of terrorist organizations. The four were permitted to do community service in lieu of serving time in jail, but the start of the sentences was deferred for appeal and the case seemed certain to reach the Supreme Court.)

ARAFAT INITIATIVE

For the remainder of 1988 the Israeli government was relegated to the sidelines as the PLO retained the political initiative by "talking peace" and achieving a long-held objective: the onset of an official dialogue with the Americans. Thirteen years earlier, on September 1, 1975, in a Memorandum of Agreement between the United States and Israel, Washington had pledged:

The United States will continue to adhere to its present policy with respect to the Palestine Liberation Organization, whereby it will not recognize or negotiate with
the [PLO] so long as the [PLO] does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The United States Government will consult fully and seek to concert its position and strategy on this issue with the Government of Israel.

With the Israeli leadership unable or unwilling to respond to developments, the pragmatic wing of the PLO leadership was able to translate the accumulated momentum of the year-old intifada, the thwarted Shultz mission, and Jordan's disengagement from the territories into a major political and diplomatic coup on an international scale.

Having crossed the Rubicon by declaring a Palestinian state, PLO chairman Arafat met in Stockholm, on December 7, with a delegation of five Jews from the American branch of the Tel Aviv-based International Center for Peace in the Middle East. This encounter produced an untitled, unsigned document, ratified by Arafat but read out by Foreign Minister Sten Andersson of Sweden (who would play a key behind-the-scenes role in the events leading up to the U.S. decision to talk to the PLO), declaring that the recent PNC meeting in Algiers had accepted Israel's right to exist as an independent state, had committed the PLO to take part in an international peace conference on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338, and had condemned and rejected terrorism "in all its forms," including state terrorism (a reference to Israeli activity in the occupied territories and in Lebanon). This statement sparked a mixed bag of reactions. Asked in an Israel TV interview (December 7) whether he saw any positive change in PLO policy in the wake of the Stockholm declaration, Prime Minister Shamir, while admitting that he had not seen the "complete text" of the statement, said: "I do not see such a change, nor do I expect that I will ever see a substantive change, since their raison d'être is Israel's destruction. On the day they conclude that this is not possible or desirable, they will have to disband."

The day, although not the outcome predicted by Shamir, was closer at hand than the Israeli political hierarchy had believed possible. On December 13, Arafat addressed the UN General Assembly, meeting in Geneva because the State Department had refused the PLO chairman a visa to enter the United States. The PLO leader declared before the world forum that the Palestine National Council had "reaffirmed its rejection of terrorism in all its forms, including state terrorism," and that he, "as chairman of the [PLO], hereby once more declare that I condemn terrorism in all its forms." Invoking General Assembly Resolution 181 of 1947, which "decided on the establishment of two states in Palestine, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish," Arafat presented a three-point "Palestinian peace initiative" calling for an international conference; the stationing of UN forces in "our occupied Palestinian land . . . to protect our people and, at the same time, to supervise the withdrawal of Israeli forces from our country"; and a "comprehensive settlement among the parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the State of Palestine, Israel, and her neighbors, within the framework of the international conference for peace in the Middle East on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338. . . ." Arafat called on "the
leaders of Israel to come here under the sponsorship of the United Nations, so that, together, we can forge that peace.”

It was still not enough for Washington. State Department spokesman Charles Redman said that, although Arafat’s speech had contained “some interesting and positive developments . . . it continued to be ambiguous on the key issues which must be clearly addressed in order for the U.S. to enter a substantive dialogue with the PLO.” Redman revealed that indirect contacts were under way between the United States and the PLO, with the Americans having conveyed “in very explicit, specific terms” to the PLO, through certain “third parties”—presumably Sweden—the conditions Arafat would have to meet before a dialogue with the United States could begin. Despite this coaching, Arafat had failed to deliver the goods.

In the territories, the Gaza Strip was again placed under total curfew prior to Arafat’s speech, all telephone lines to the refugee camps were cut, and the power supply was turned off in some locales, although on nothing like the scale of the previous month. Five persons were wounded in clashes in the West Bank, three of them children aged 10, 13, and 16. Children in Gaza released balloons with Palestinian flags painted on them after Arafat’s speech, and a few brief parades and demonstrations were held in the West Bank, primarily in the Nablus area.

In Jerusalem, within hours of Arafat’s speech, Prime Minister Shamir released a statement describing Arafat’s performance as “a monumental act of deception,” and expressing his hope that “for the sake of promoting the chances of peace and advancing the struggle against terrorism and violence, the United States will never establish any contact with the PLO.”

Defense Minister Rabin, who as prime minister in 1975 was a co-architect with then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger of the PLO clause in the Memorandum of Agreement, told Army Radio on December 14 that at that time Washington had committed itself, at Israel’s behest, to “formulations which I did not believe the PLO was capable of accepting.” Asked what would happen if the PLO were, nevertheless, to state its acceptance of those conditions, Rabin, too, offered a variation on Shamir’s theme. “The PLO would cease being the PLO if it were to accept all these [stipulations].” Foreign Minister Peres, speaking in the Knesset on December 14, said Arafat had “performed acrobatics” at Geneva, so it was “no wonder that the tense anticipation in Washington yesterday before the speech quickly turned into immediate disappointment after they read the speech.”

U.S. Recognizes PLO

Before the day was out, however, Washington had reversed its stand of 24 hours earlier, in the process delivering to Israel what the daily Hadashot called “the most resounding diplomatic slap-in-the-face” in its history. U.S. officials were listening closely when Arafat, speaking at a previously scheduled but delayed press conference in Geneva on December 14, made an opening statement in which he “clarified”
the crucial points in his General Assembly speech. (Reportedly, Arafat rescheduled the event so that he could confer with Swedish foreign minister Andersson, who was in touch with the State Department to ensure coordination regarding Arafat’s terminology.)

Thus, Arafat declared that the Palestinians’ “desire for peace is a strategy and not an interim tactic” and “[s]elf-determination means survival for the Palestinians. And our survival does not destroy the survival of the Israelis as their rulers claim.” Concretely, Arafat explained that by the references in his speech to Resolution 181 and to “our acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for negotiations with Israel” in an international conference,

it was clear that we mean our people’s right to freedom and national independence according to Resolution 181 and the right of all parties concerned in the Middle East conflict to exist in peace and security, and as I have mentioned including the State of Palestine and Israel and other neighbors according to the Resolution 242 and 338 [sic].

On the terrorism issue, Arafat said, “I renounced it yesterday in no uncertain terms and yet I repeat it for the record that we totally and absolutely renounce all forms of terrorism, including individual, group and state terrorism.” (By adding the words “individual” and “group” Arafat had in fact significantly expanded his statement of the previous day.)

The quid pro quo was immediate. Within hours President Reagan declared:

The Palestine Liberation Organization today issued a statement in which it accepted United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, recognized Israel’s right to exist and renounced terrorism. These have long been our conditions for a substantive dialogue. They have been met. Therefore I have authorized the State Department to enter into a substantive dialogue with PLO representatives. The [PLO] must live up to its statements. In particular it must demonstrate that its renunciation of terrorism is pervasive and permanent.

The president termed the U.S. decision “an important step in the peace process, the more so because it represents the serious evolution of Palestinian thinking towards realistic and pragmatic positions on the key issues.” Israel was assured that the “special commitment” of the United States to its security “remains unshakable.” Moreover, a “major reason” that the United States was commencing a dialogue with the PLO was “to help Israel achieve the recognition and security it deserves.”

On December 15, Secretary of State Shultz sent identical letters to Shamir and Peres, explaining that after “stud[y]ing the text of Arafat’s remarks carefully,” he had concluded that they “satisfie[d] the long-standing American conditions for opening a substantive dialogue.” Shultz wrote that he was aware of “how sensitive an issue this is for you and the people of Israel,” and that the U.S. decision “was not taken lightly.” He too emphasized that Washington was motivated by “the desire to see a safe and strong Israel, living in peace with its neighbors. Nothing will shake the foundations of our relationship.” Shultz promised that the United States would keep Israel “fully informed of what transpires in our [dialogue] with the
PLO,” which was to be conducted solely by the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia. (Ambassador Robert Pelletreau held his first meeting with a PLO delegation in Tunis on December 16.)

When Shamir, stunned by Washington’s decision, disappeared from public view for two days after the U.S. announcement, his spokesman, Aviezer Pazner, issued a statement (December 15) “very much regret[ting]” the U.S. decision, “which will not advance the cause of peace” in the region. “We believe that the United States will discover very soon the true face of the PLO,” Pazner added. In the same vein, Foreign Minister Peres told Israel Radio on the same day, in reference to Arafat’s renunciation of terrorism, that “in my opinion, if one Molotov cocktail is thrown today in the territories this will nullify his entire commitment.” Peres termed the development “a sad day for all of us” and did not miss the chance to rub salt in the wounds of “those who opposed Jordan[ian participation] and an international conference [and thereby] paved the way for the PLO.”

Shamir broke his silence in an interview on Israel Radio on December 17, with words that seemed to betray (at best) a sense of sheer bewilderment. Shamir invoked the usual formulation in cases of divergent Israeli and U.S. approaches—“allies can have serious disagreements, but [these] do not affect the alliance itself”—only to call it into question: “This week something happened that puts this principle to a very serious test. The U.S. decided to commence talks with Israel’s arch enemy. It is no wonder that we are all trying to decide what happened, why it happened, and what we should do about it.” However, within two days Shamir had recovered sufficiently to tell the First World Conference of Children of Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem that the international community was now witnessing a “worldwide spectacle of deception” in which the PLO chairman and his cohorts were trying with “satanic intent” to achieve by “political cunning what they were unable to bring about by means of weapons, blood, terrorism and violence.” Israel, however, would not be taken in by this “show” and would not talk to “terrorists whose one goal is to establish another Arab state . . . in place of the Jewish state.”

Defense Minister Rabin linked the U.S. decision to the intifada when he told Israel TV on December 16 that Washington’s decision was “grave and mistaken,” and that its effect was to “give legitimization to the uprising in the territories.” Earlier that day, five persons, aged 18–22, were killed by IDF gunfire and about 20 wounded—three of whom later died—in a series of incidents in Nablus, some of which revolved around the funeral of a 15-year-old boy who had died of wounds sustained three weeks earlier. Some saw the events in Nablus as a jittery reaction by the Israeli defense establishment to the unexpected developments in Geneva and Washington; military sources said the violence was the work of extremists who opposed the PLO’s diplomatic moves. Local residents claimed that soldiers opened fire without provocation. A three-day general strike was called in the territories to protest the shootings in Nablus. On the same day a nine-month-old infant girl from the settlement of Dolev, near Ramallah, suffered severe head wounds when she was hit by a rock thrown at the car in which she was a passenger.
There was no letup in the violence. On December 17, a husband and wife from the settlement of Ginot Shomron in Samaria were seriously injured when a rock smashed through the windshield of their car near Kalkilya. On December 18, three Palestinians were shot and killed by Israeli troops in the territories—one of them when he was spotted on the roof of a building holding a concrete block to be hurled down at a passing soldier—and about 30 others were wounded. The cabinet, at its weekly meeting that day, rejected a proposal from Labor ministers Moshe Shahal and Gad Yaakobi to introduce "unilateral autonomy" in the territories in the wake of the new situation created by the PLO's revised stands and Washington's decision to start a dialogue with the organization. Prime Minister Shamir said that "the government cannot make decisions today, but they will be made soon."

This was the final cabinet meeting of the outgoing government. The new government was approved in the Knesset four days later. Following the U.S. decision on the PLO, Shamir engineered a breakthrough in the deadlocked coalition talks. Arguing convincingly that only another unity government could rebuff the challenges facing Israel, he successfully brought the second consecutive such government into being (see below).

On December 24, tens of thousands of Israelis attended a Peace Now rally in Tel Aviv at which speakers—including MKs from Labor, Mapam, Citizens' Rights, and Shinui—called on the government to launch a dialogue with the PLO in pursuit of peace and an end to the occupation. The previous day the mass-circulation Yediot Aharonot had carried a poll suggesting that 54 percent of Israelis favored talks with the PLO.

At year's end two of the main adversaries in the arena voiced ideas that were at bottom similar about a possible way out of the vicious cycle of violence. In an interview in Ha'aretz (December 30), Prime Minister Shamir referred to the possibility of holding "democratic elections" in the territories, as envisaged in the Camp David accords, with the Arab residents there electing an "administrative council to run their internal affairs" but which would also become "the legitimate representative of the Palestinians in negotiations" with Israel. On December 29, Davar quoted Faisal al-Husseini, the most prominent Palestinian public figure in the territories and a supporter of Arafat's Fatah organization, as saying that if Israel were to permit "free, democratic, unconditional elections, unrelated to the autonomy plan, it is probable that the majority of the residents of the territories would take part in them and [thus] elect their representation for political talks with Israel." Husseini made these remarks to MK Yair Tzaban (Mapam), who was visiting him in prison, where he was still being held under an administrative detention order.

The gap between those two positions was probably more easily bridged than the chasm of mistrust, enmity, and sheer hatred that was generated by IDF activity in the territories in 1988, involving unremitting friction between troops and Civil Administration officials and the Palestinians. According to B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 293 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli security forces in the first year of the uprising (December
9, 1987–December 8, 1988). There were 199 fatalities in the West Bank and 94 in the Gaza Strip. Of these, 270 resulted from shootings (including plastic and rubber bullets), 20 from beatings (13 cases in the Gaza Strip), and 3 from other causes. Over half (55.6 percent) of the fatalities were in the 17–24 age group; 18.8 percent were aged 25–35, 14.3 percent were 13–16 year old, and 9 deaths (3.1 percent) were of children below the age of 12. The number of wounded was not known, but ran into the thousands.

In April Chief of Staff Dan Shomron said that unduly harsh measures in the territories would only stiffen solidarity and resistance among the population, necessitating even more stringent actions. “Bear in mind that we will have to live with these people,” he cautioned then. In November Shomron acknowledged the double-bind situation in which Israel found itself when he told the Knesset’s Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee that “every measure we take [to lower the level of the uprising] causes long-term damage”—but that failure to take those measures would also cause long-term harm. The real problem the IDF and the State of Israel faced in combating the uprising was encapsulated by O/C Central Command Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna in a November interview with the Jerusalem Post. “The intifada,” he said, “is not so much throwing stones as it is a state of mind.”

OTHER NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Knesset Elections

Around the end of March, Labor party chairman Shimon Peres pronounced the Knesset elections scheduled for November 1 “the most important since the establishment of the state.” Peres, who was addressing a meeting of Labor’s Central Committee—which reelected him party chairman by acclamation—spoke against the background of nearly four months of violent mass demonstrations in the territories and the Shultz peace initiative, then at its height. His assumption that the peace question was the most crucial issue facing the country was broadly accepted. Peres himself hoped to ride the crest of the peace wave to victory in November or, alternatively, to score points by blaming the Likud for torpedoing the chance for peace.

THE PARTY LISTS

Both the Labor Alignment and Herut (the dominant element of the Likud) made efforts to rejuvenate their ranks and present a more attractive list of candidates. In Labor, a sweeping “democratization” process initiated largely by the party’s general secretary, MK Uzi Baram, had eliminated many of the manifestations of internal “bossism” (although the first six slots were still reserved for the party’s “elder
On June 15, Labor’s Central Committee exercised its new prerogatives, with the result that 17 of the party’s MKs in the 11th Knesset were dropped (some by their own choice) from the 1988 ticket. They were replaced, in almost every instance, by young activists, many of Sephardi origin and some hailing from development towns. (Ultimately, of the 39 Labor candidates elected to the 12th Knesset, no fewer than 14 were new MKs.) Yet a price was paid: many Israelis, and not only Labor supporters, were shocked that the veteran parliamentarian and statesman Abba Eban was denied a realistic place on Labor’s list—after 30 years in the Knesset and stints as education minister and foreign minister, acquiring in the process, as the Jerusalem Post noted, “an international reputation as Israel’s most articulate spokesman.” Similarly, women fared poorly in the final ranking, getting only 10-percent realistic representation (four places in the first 40).

Three weeks later (July 6), Herut’s 2,100-member Central Committee, long since “democratized,” put on a display of rough-and-tumble political infighting whose ultimate result, in the opinion of most observers, was to weaken the standing of party leader Yitzhak Shamir. In the jockeying for position by the three rival camps in the party, headed by David Levy, Ariel Sharon, and Shamir ally Moshe Arens, the Levy and Sharon blocs were able to unite long enough to outvote the Shamir camp and push Arens into fourth place behind Shamir, Levy, and Sharon. (In the final Likud ranking, about 10 percent of the slots went to Herut’s Liberal party allies, and on August 25, the two parties formally merged, the new entity known as the “Likud National Liberal Movement.”) New faces among the top ten on the Herut list were Binyamin Begin, the son of reclusive former prime minister Menachem Begin, and Benjamin Netanyahu, who at the end of March had abruptly resigned his post as UN ambassador in order to stand for a place on the Likud list. Oddly enough, despite Herut’s identification with the Sephardi and “oriental” Jewish communities, its list was top-heavy with Ashkenazim (in contrast to Labor). Besides this, only one woman (from the Liberals) was included among the first 40 candidates on the final Likud list and not a single Arab or Druze (Labor’s list contained two Israeli Arabs).

Twenty-eight lists—many of them single-issue (and, it sometimes seemed, single-person) groups, seeking everything from abolition of the income tax to a better deal for pensioners/prisoners/development towns/demobilized soldiers/Yemenites—had officially applied to run by the registration deadline, September 27. However, only 27 survived the final cutoff. On October 5, the Central Elections Committee (composed of representatives from the parties in the outgoing Knesset and headed by Supreme Court justice Eliezer Goldberg) voted overwhelmingly, 28–5 with three abstentions, to bar MK Rabbi Meir Kahane’s Kach party from running. The grounds adduced for the decision were that Kach incited to racism and rejected the “democratic character of the state,” two of the criteria contained in a 1985 amendment to the Basic Law: Knesset—passed in the wake of Kahane’s successful Knesset campaign in 1984—under which a list could be prevented from participating in Knesset elections. The votes against barring Kahane were cast by the religious parties—Kahane cited the Torah and Jewish religious law as the inspiration for his
platform advocating a theocracy free of Arabs and "Hellenizing Jews"—while the abstentions came from the ultranationalist camp. Kahane was the only Kach MK in the outgoing Knesset, but he was given a good chance of winning at least three seats in 1988 because of an intifada backlash inside Israel in general and among Kahane's constituency in particular. Kahane lost no time in appealing the decision to the Supreme Court.

Following a pattern in recent years, every action taken by the Left against Kahane triggered measures by the Right against the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), an Arab-Jewish party advocating the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Thus, on the day following the vote to keep Kach out of the campaign, the Central Elections Committee voted on motions to similarly bar the PLP—but these were rejected, 20–19. The decisive vote was cast by Justice Goldberg, who was not persuaded by arguments that the PLP's platform "negated the existence of Israel as the state of the Jewish people," a provision of the 1985 amendment inserted at the demand of the religious-right-wing bloc and aimed explicitly at the PLP. However, in this case, too, the final decision was to rest with the Supreme Court, following a petition filed by the Likud, Tehiya, Agudat Israel, and the National Religious party to overturn the committee's decision.

In the event, the rulings by the Supreme Court, announced on October 18, upheld and mirrored the votes of the Central Elections Committee. Sitting in an expanded panel of five justices, the court voted unanimously to bar Kach from running and, 3–2, to allow the PLP to participate. The decision regarding Kach, which was written by Supreme Court president Meir Shamgar, rejected Kahane's contention that the Halakhah (Jewish religious law) was incompatible with a democratic Jewish state and found that Kach's goals and actions were "manifestly racist" in a manner that was "appallingly similar to the most horrific experience of the Jewish people." On the PLP petition, the court majority held that the written material submitted for its perusal in support of barring the list was insufficiently "clear, convincing, and unequivocal."

Although Kahane was out of the race, his ideas about Arabs were not. They were well represented in the form of the new Moledet (Homeland) party headed by Maj. Gen. (res.) Rehavam Ze'evi. Like Kahane, Ze'evi played on deep-rooted fears of Israeli Jews, and taking as his point of departure the need to preserve Greater Israel, carried to its logical extreme the solution of the demographic problem that confronted those who wished to retain the occupied territories but also prevent the emergence of a binational state. Ze'evi called for a so-called voluntary transfer of the Arabs from the territories to Arab states. Not surprisingly, since the start of the uprising in the territories, opinion polls suggested that ever more Israelis were willing to entertain such a notion. Opponents of the scheme argued that, beyond the moral principles involved—since the Palestinians would obviously not "volunteer" to leave their homes, especially after their national consciousness had been raised by the intifada—the "transfer" in question was a mere euphemism for outright expulsion.
Ze'evi's stance was utterly devoid of a religious dimension; instead, he professed to find his inspiration in the national-liberation movement of the Jewish people, Zionism. (See also the section on "Extremism," below.) Besides the absence of the "Judaic" dimension in Ze'evi's ideas, what differentiated him from Kahane was that he was an authentic insider in the Israeli establishment. With his military background, his friends in high places, and his directorship of the Eretz-Israel Museum in Tel Aviv, Ze'evi made his pitch to a very different element of the population than Kahane, although he undoubtedly picked up votes from Kahane supporters after Kach was barred from the elections.

THE CAMPAIGN

At all events, the impact of the Palestinian uprising ensured that the "Arab question," in one form or another, became the central theme of the election campaign. The problem was that where the occupied territories were concerned, neither major party offered substantive, realistic, or innovative solutions. Both Likud and Labor were locked into their traditional platforms and clearly felt that a general election was not a propitious time to rock the boat. The Likud again resorted to guilt-by-association tactics against its chief rival. Its allegations that Labor would make a deal with the abhorred PLO were intended to create in the public's mind an identification between Labor and the PLO in order to discredit and demonize Labor. The tone was set in an article by Ariel Sharon (Hadashot, October 2), who asserted that the "Labor party leadership is engaged in a consistent endeavor to legitimize the PLO as a negotiating partner with Israel"—and then went on to equate Arafat with Hitler and the PLO with the Third Reich. The reader was left to draw the inference.

Labor, which for years had advocated the "Jordanian option," was nonplussed by King Hussein's formal disengagement from the West Bank virtually on the eve of the election campaign. This forced the party to abruptly drop from its campaign two of its principal planks: negotiations with Jordan (rather than with the Palestinians) to resolve the West Bank question, and an international peace conference framework (which no longer had a rationale now that Hussein was out of the picture). Still unwilling to address the real issues, Labor dredged up the 20-year-old Allon Plan for a "territorial compromise" in the West Bank. To demonstrate that a desire for peace was not tantamount to "wimpishness," and that Labor would not let itself be outdone by the Likud in projecting a tough image, the party turned to recently retired generals, notably Avigdor Ben-Gal and Ori Orr, who came up with a document stating that "the area to be relinquished by Israel in return for peace will be surrounded by Israeli forces on the west, the north, the south, and the east." One Labor party TV ad showed an electronic fence that would separate Israel from the Palestinian "enclave." The "generals' plan," as it was dubbed, was meant to demonstrate that the Allon Plan, far from being a "compromise out of weakness,"
was a scheme “that traps the Palestinians between a rock and a hard place without their being annexed but with peace.”

The Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox parties, wracked by infighting that produced splits and splinter groups, enlisted “generals” of a different stripe. Agudat Israel ads (in the written press only—the Aguda shunned TV as immoral) featured the Brooklyn-based Lubavitcher Rebbe. Also supporting the all-Ashkenazi Aguda was the “Baba Baruch,” a “wonder-working” rabbi with a zealous following among Israel’s large Moroccan community. Both Shamir and Peres paid highly publicized (and ultimately futile) visits to his headquarters in the Negev development town of Netivot. A new list, Degel Hatorah (Torah Flag), was formed by Aguda breakaways guided by the venerable Rabbi Eliezer Schach, a bitter enemy of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and the Habad movement and a mentor of Shas. The latter, originally a Sephardi breakaway from Agudat Israel, used former Sephardi chief rabbi Ovadia Yosef in its TV ads. Shas played up the ethnic issue for all it was worth, railed against the disintegration of moral values in the modern society, and called for a return to religious fundamentals. One Shas TV ad, which stunned secular viewers and seemed to reveal the mind-set of at least part of the Shas constituency, showed a group of rabbis, clothed in traditional garb, intoning ritual incantations which were meant to release from their vows all persons who had taken an oath to vote for a specific party (i.e., a party other than Shas).

The religious-Zionist bloc, which had seen its ranks decimated in recent years by defections to both Herut (under Menachem Begin) and ultra-Orthodoxy, was able to hold its ground but little more. The ethnic factor crept into the National Religious party’s selection of candidates when Prof. Avner Shaki, the hawkish leader of the NRP’s Sephardi wing, scored an upset win over Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer in the fight for the top slot on the party’s Knesset list. Of the NRP’s first five candidates, two others besides Shaki were strongly identified with the Greater Israel movement.

The NRP’s continuing tilt to the right produced a dovish backlash in the form of Meimad, a list headed by Rabbi Yehuda Amital, the dean of the hesder yeshivah (religious studies combined with army service) in the West Bank settlement of Alon Shvut. Despite these credentials, Amital expressed a readiness for territorial concessions in the territories, was against coercive religious legislation, and warned against the consequences of extremism. The NRP waged a bitter campaign against the new movement. Meimad’s failure to obtain enough votes to enter the Knesset (1 percent of the total cast) spoke volumes about the mood among the religious-Zionist public in the Israel of 1988.

Feuding was also rife in the Arab sector, where the Communist party and the PLP (both ostensibly Arab-Jewish parties but which in practice drew nearly all their support from Israel’s Arabs) were unable to overcome their differences long enough to sign a surplus-vote agreement to ensure that one of them would benefit from leftover votes after the allocation of seats, if those votes added up to another seat. (In the event, this failure cost the Communists, and hence Israel’s Arabs, a fifth
A new feature on the Arab scene and also a sign of the times was the appearance of an all-Arab list, the Arab Democratic party, founded and headed by MK Abdel Wahab Darousha, who left Labor in protest at Defense Minister Rabin's policy toward the intifada. The campaigns of all three parties were focused largely on the occupation and the uprising—indeed, one PLP ad was banned by Justice Goldberg because it included a segment with PLO chief Yasser Arafat.

The uprising also featured prominently in the campaigns of the small established parties to the left of Labor and to the right of Likud. The Citizen's Rights Movement (CRM), Shinui, and Mapam—the latter ran independently of Labor for the first time in 23 years and was outraged when Labor signed a surplus-votes agreement with the CRM—urged that concessions be made for the sake of peace and called for an end to the occupation. Tehiya and Tzomet (the latter headed by former chief of staff Rafael Eitan, who broke with Tehiya), as well as Moledet, called for annexation of the territories, massive Jewish settlement, and the "eradication" of the intifada. These parties, and particularly the two largest, the CRM and Tehiya, laid a claim to ideological "purity," contending that they represented the unadulterated Left and Right, respectively. To demonstrate the point, they pooled some of their allotted television time to screen a debate between their leaders, MK Shulamit Aloni of the CRM and MK Yuval Ne'eman of Tehiya.

Economic and social issues were relegated to a secondary place in the campaign, although the Likud pounced on the ills of the giant Koor concern, which was affiliated with the Labor party via the Histadrut (Federation of Labor), and the attendant large-scale layoffs. Mapam, which had worked hard since its break with Labor to reassert itself as a socialist party whose chief concern was the worker, reaped the rewards of its endeavors, thanks in large measure to MK Yair Tzaban, its popular prophet of social justice.

Overall, though, in stark contrast to the pronouncements about the overriding importance of the elections, and combined spending by the parties estimated at $100 million, the campaign failed to catch fire. This was perhaps not surprising, since the two big parties had just completed four years of generally close and mutually beneficial cooperation in a national unity government. To see them suddenly attacking each other strained credibility. The by-now traditional TV debate between the leaders of Likud and Labor did little to enlighten the supposed quarter of a million undecided voters who were once more the primary target of the campaigns waged by the two major parties. The debate itself, which was finally held on October 23, a week before the election, had been the object of much bickering. The main stumbling blocks were disagreement over the moderator and the Shamir camp's insistence that the questions be submitted to the participants in advance, a stipulation that the Peres camp rejected outright and on which Shamir yielded. A word count made after the debate found that the moderator, Dan Shilon, a well-known radio and TV personality, had spoken more words than either of the two debaters.

The uprising finally impinged directly on the campaign in a brutal and tragic manner. On the evening of October 30, about 36 hours before the polls opened, a
young ultra-Orthodox mother and her three infant children were burned to death when the interurban bus on which they were traveling was firebombed in Jericho. Immediately after the election results became known, Shimon Peres claimed that this incident had cost Labor three seats—a contention intended to take the onus off Peres for Labor’s second-place finish, but which was obviously impossible to prove. At all events, when Peres failed to turn up at Labor’s final campaign rally in Pardes Katz, and rumors flew that he had decided not to make a public appearance for fear of violence against him by hotheads in the wake of the bus outrage, his aides let it be known that he was visiting casualties of the attack. Rabin, for his part, took the unusual step of ordering the gutted hulk of the bus removed without allowing media access, leading Ariel Sharon and others to accuse the defense minister of acting out of electoral considerations, but Rabin said he had been guided by reasons of national morale and a desire not to enflame passions in the territories. On election day itself, a car carrying Likud activists was hit with a gasoline bomb in East Jerusalem, and one woman suffered serious burns. Such incidents were not likely to induce Israelis to respond to Yasir Arafat’s eve-of-election plea that they should vote for “peace-seeking” parties. Both Likud and Labor rejected Arafat’s attempt to intervene in the elections. Earlier, Arafat had addressed a similar call to Israeli Arabs.

ELECTION RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The fragmented outcome of the election, and especially the cynical horse-trading that characterized the coalition negotiations, prompted renewed calls for a change in the country’s electoral system. (In June a private member’s bill to modify the

ELECTIONS TO THE 12TH KNESSET  
(November 1, 1988)  
AND 11TH KNESSET (July 23, 1984)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>1984</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eligible voters</td>
<td>2,894,267</td>
<td>2,654,613</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid votes cast(^a)</td>
<td>2,283,123</td>
<td>2,073,321</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid votes cast for parties not qualifying(^a)</td>
<td>55,505</td>
<td>58,978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid votes counting in allocation of seats(^b)</td>
<td>2,227,618</td>
<td>2,014,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quota per Knesset seat(^b)</td>
<td>18,563</td>
<td>15,312</td>
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\(^a\)Only lists receiving at least 1 percent of the valid votes cast—i.e., 22,831 in 1988—are entitled to share in the allocation of seats.  
\(^b\)The quotient for one Knesset seat is the number of valid votes cast for the lists qualifying—i.e., 2,227,618 in 1988—divided by 120 (the number of Knesset seats). Thus the quotient in 1988 was 18,563.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Popular Vote (%)</th>
<th>Net Gain or Loss</th>
<th>Knesset Seats</th>
<th>Net Gain or Loss</th>
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<tr>
<td>Likud</td>
<td>709,305 (31.1)</td>
<td>661,302 (31.9)</td>
<td>- (0.8)</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>685,363 (30.0)</td>
<td>724,074 (31.9)</td>
<td>- (1.9)</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>Sephardi Torah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guardians (Shas)</td>
<td>107,709 (4.7)</td>
<td>63,605 (3.06)</td>
<td>+ (1.64)</td>
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<td>Agudat Israel</td>
<td>102,714 (4.5)</td>
<td>36,079 (1.7)</td>
<td>+ (2.8)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens Rights and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peace Movement</td>
<td>97,513 (4.3)</td>
<td>49,698 (2.4)</td>
<td>+ (1.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Religious</td>
<td>89,720 (3.9)</td>
<td>73,530 (3.5)</td>
<td>+ (0.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Front for Peace and Equality</td>
<td>84,032 (3.7)</td>
<td>69,815 (3.36)</td>
<td>+ (0.34)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tehiya&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>70,730 (3.1)</td>
<td>83,037 (4.0)</td>
<td>- (0.9)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Mapam&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>56,345 (2.5)</td>
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<td>Tzomet&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>45,489 (2.0)</td>
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<td>Moledet</td>
<td>44,174 (1.9)</td>
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<td>Shinui</td>
<td>39,538 (1.7)</td>
<td>54,747 (2.6)</td>
<td>- (0.9)</td>
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<td>Degel Hatorah</td>
<td>34,279 (1.5)</td>
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<td>Progressive List for Peace</td>
<td>33,695 (1.5)</td>
<td>38,012 (1.8)</td>
<td>- (0.3)</td>
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<td>Arab Democratic party</td>
<td>27,012 (1.2)</td>
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<td>Pensioners</td>
<td>16,674 (0.7)</td>
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<td>Meimad</td>
<td>15,783 (0.7)</td>
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<td>Derech Eretz</td>
<td>4,253 (0.2)</td>
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<td>Le'or</td>
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<td>Just Society</td>
<td>3,222 (0.1)</td>
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<td>Yishai</td>
<td>2,947 (0.1)</td>
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<td>Ma'as</td>
<td>2,838 (0.1)</td>
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<td>Tarshish</td>
<td>1,654 (0.07)</td>
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<td>Quiet Force</td>
<td>1,579 (0.07)</td>
<td>1,472 (0.07)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>1,018 (0.04)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemenites Union</td>
<td>909 (0.04)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Achdut</td>
<td>446 (0.02)</td>
<td>733 (0.035)</td>
<td>- (0.015)</td>
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</table>

<sup>a</sup>In 1984 the Labor Alignment included Mapam. Ezer Weizman's Yahad party, which won 3 seats in 1984, merged with Labor and its candidates were part of the Alignment list in 1988.

<sup>b</sup>In 1984 Tehiya and Tzomet ran together on a single list.

absolute proportional system, sponsored by the Knesset's Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee, passed its first reading by 69–37—the first time such a proposal had garnered the 61-vote absolute majority required to amend the law. However, the bill was then effectively buried in the same Law Committee whose chairman, Eli Kulas from the Likud, bowed to pressure from Prime Minister Shamir to table the legislation because of objections by the religious parties.)
The big loser in the election was Shimon Peres, and the big winner was the ultra-Orthodox parties. Peres, who was the centerpiece of Labor's election ads no less than a presidential candidate in the United States and ran what amounted to a single-issue campaign on the "peace" question, lost or at least failed to win his fourth straight election. (Rabin also appeared on TV with some frequency, but others, such as the party's "new faces" or Histadrut secretary-general Israel Kesar, were rarely if ever seen.) Calls in Labor for Peres's replacement as party leader that were voiced immediately after the results became known were soon muted, but the real power in the party passed almost palpably into the hands of Yitzhak Rabin. It was Rabin who called the shots in the coalition bargaining that ensued, Rabin who virtually coerced Peres into accepting a portfolio he did not want, and Rabin who, together with Yitzhak Shamir, created the second consecutive national unity government—ensuring in the process his retention of the key defense portfolio.

The 18 seats won by religious lists, a dramatic gain of 50 percent as compared with 1984, restored the numerical representation religious parties had enjoyed in the 1960s and early 1970s. However, there was a crucial difference. At that time religious Zionist parties, led by the NRP, had obtained about two-thirds of all the religious votes. In 1988 the situation was more than reversed: 13 of the 18 Knesset seats secured by religious lists were won by haredi, or ultra-Orthodox, parties that espoused a fundamentalist approach to religion and a non-Zionist if not anti-Zionist world view. The three ultra-Orthodox parties that entered the Knesset—Shas, Agudat Israel, and Degel Hatorah—received almost 75 percent of the votes cast for religious parties, an improvement of nearly a third over the combined 1984 haredi showing. Manifestly, a sea change had occurred in the religious sector. The spectacular performance by the religious lists, with Shas becoming the third largest faction in the House, came as an even more severe jolt to the nonreligious sector, because the polls had consistently predicted that the religious bloc would not better its 1984 representation. (The pollsters somewhat lamely explained—after the fact—that the haredi population refused to participate in polls.)

The Likud, with just over 31 percent of the votes cast, remained the country's largest party, though just barely. Nothing better exemplified the political atomization in the country than the fact that even the leading party won less than a third of the popular vote. A comparative analysis of voting patterns in 1984 and 1988 by the Central Bureau of Statistics showed that, while the Likud held its ground overall in the Jewish urban sector (obtaining about 35 percent of the total vote in the cities and large towns), its support in the development towns declined by 5 percent. This was more than accounted for by the gains recorded in that sector by religious parties, particularly Shas and Agudat Israel, which took 21 percent of the vote of this largely underprivileged and largely Asian-African population, more than double their 1984 performance and only 2 percent less than Labor.

Labor lost ground almost everywhere. In the Jewish urban centers its percentage of the popular vote declined from 34 percent in 1984 to 30 percent in 1988; in the moshavim, from 42 percent to 34 percent; and in the kibbutzim, from 79 percent
to 55 percent, this due to the separate appearance of Mapam, which took 28 percent of the kibbutz vote. Labor also suffered a falloff among the non-Jewish population, obtaining 17 percent of the votes of Israel's Arabs, down from 23 percent in 1984. The turnout in the Arab sector was comparatively low (about 74 percent), and although Israel's Arabs possessed the potential to elect 12 MKs (they constituted 18 percent of the country's population, but the majority were below the voting age of 18) and thus bring about a drastic realignment in the Knesset, the three parties identified with the country's Arab population returned only half that number, the same as in 1984. Likewise, as in 1984, one of every three votes cast in non-Jewish locales went to the Communists, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality.

The small parties to the left of Labor—the CRM, Mapam, and Shinui—returned ten MKs, with the CRM nearly doubling its 1984 vote, and Mapam, with three MKs, succeeding beyond its own best hopes. Overall, however, the combined Labor-Left bloc decreased by 4 Knesset seats, from 59 to 55, as compared with 1984.

On the other side of the spectrum, the parties to the right of Likud—Tehiya, Tzomet, and Moledet—increased their representation in the House from six to seven MKs (and would have had eight had Tzomet and Moledet signed a surplus-vote agreement). The ultranationalist parties obtained 50,000 more votes than in 1984, increasing their strength throughout the country. Indeed, the only sphere that disappointed the Right was the one area in which they had felt confident of success—the army. Even though the Likud and the small right-wing parties together garnered more than half the votes in the IDF, and the parties to the right of the Likud outperformed the parties to the left of Labor by 16 percent to 11 percent, the votes were broadly distributed so that Tehiya, which had counted on the army vote for a fourth seat, had to settle for three.

**Forming a Government**

The one overriding fact that triggered the political wheeling and dealing of the 50 days following the election was that, of the 27 lists that had run, no fewer than 15 entered the Knesset, 6 of them with no more than two MKs. Furthermore, Labor and Likud had finished in a virtual dead heat, with the Likud one key seat ahead. Broadly speaking, the results were as inconclusive as they had been in 1984, and the religious bloc, especially the ultra-Orthodox parties, held the key to a narrow coalition, whether led by Likud or Labor. No one was more keenly aware of this situation and its ramifications than the ultra-Orthodox parties.

In the last analysis, however, the ultrareligious bloc overreached itself, and a series of ironic twists and reversals ensued. The inordinate terms put forward by the haredi parties, especially Agudat Israel, under the prodding of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, for joining a narrow coalition, spurred the overwhelming majority of organized American Jewry—affiliated with the Reform and Conservative movements—to mount an intensive lobbying campaign vis-à-vis the Israeli political establishment and triggered a secular backlash within Israel. The growing debate about whether
Diaspora Jewry had the "right" to express itself on key topics regarding Israel (see also AJYB 1989, pp. 424-425) was for all practical purposes resolved when the postelection lobbying of the American Jewish leadership played an instrumental, if indirect, role in the formation of the second national unity government; and not only the "Who is a Jew?" amendment but virtually all religious legislation was shelved for the foreseeable future.

The squabble between the Israeli political leadership and American Jewry over the religious issue occurred while the PLO was engaged in diplomacy geared to translate the intifada into political gains, including the start of a dialogue with the United States. Jerusalem's intense preoccupation with the complexities of coalition making, and the estrangement between Israel and the American Jewish leadership over the religious question, meant that Israel's ability to respond forcefully to events in the international arena suffered. Finally, the concrete onset of the U.S.-PLO dialogue, perceived by Prime Minister-designate Yitzhak Shamir as inimical in the extreme to Israeli interests, was seized upon by him as sufficient cause to abandon any notion of forming a right-wing-religious coalition and to make concessions to Labor in order to ensure the creation of a second national unity government, thus effectively putting the ultra-Orthodox bloc in the position of a fifth wheel.

Things looked somewhat different in the immediate aftermath of the election. The announced aversion of Likud and particularly Labor to another national unity government, as an opening gambit at any rate, automatically made the ultra-Orthodox parties kingmakers. The Aguda and Shas, controlling 11 seats between them, wasted little time in stating their price—in the form of monetary allocations and religious legislation—for joining a coalition. In an effort to extract additional concessions, they played both ends against the middle, negotiating with both Likud and Labor even though they were known to be more inclined to join a Likud-led government. Compounding the situation was the unbridled, and unconcealed, enmity between Shas and the Aguda. This mutual rancor derived from a feud dating back to 18th-century Eastern Europe between hassidim and mitnagdim, groups personified two centuries later by Rabbi Schneerson (the Lubavitcher Rebbe) and Rabbi Schach, a Shas mentor, respectively. Also part of the equation was the ethnic factor—Sephardim vs. Ashkenazim. (The third ultra-Orthodox party, Degel Hatorah, ostensibly associated with Shas, seemed to espouse more dovish views than either Aguda or Shas, and with only two seats was less peremptory in its demands.)

The demands of the ultra-Orthodox parties, and the apparent readiness of Peres and Shamir to accommodate them (some on the Left urged Peres to take advantage of the rivalries within the ultra-Orthodox camp and form a coalition with part of the religious bloc, even if this entailed certain concessions in the religious sphere) raised fears of "Khomeinism" among Israel's secular majority. Abba Eban encapsulated what many felt when he lashed out at the ultrareligious and ultranationalist worldviews that seemed to hold the key to a new Israeli government. Speaking at a ceremony sponsored by the Jerusalem Foundation, Eban (still formally an MK) declared: "Prophetic Judaism and classical Zionism as expressed in the Declaration
of Independence are now challenged by superstition, intolerance, political unilateralism, xenophobia and adventurism which take us far away from the world in which Israel's flag first went aloft in its own name and pride 40 years ago."

President Chaim Herzog, also reportedly alarmed by the sweeping haredi demands and a mounting secular backlash, took the unusual move of holding informal meetings with representatives of the parties that would form the 12th Knesset even before the Central Elections Committee published the official results of the vote. This was the first of several unorthodox steps on Herzog's part in an effort to bring about what he believed was the only viable solution that could break the deadlock and mute the religious-secular cacophony—the formation of a second Likud-Labor coalition. Herzog also let it be known that his office had been deluged with calls and cables urging national unity and a change in the electoral system—70,000 such appeals would eventually reach the president. Herzog, while barred from actively intervening in politics, thus implicitly lent his support to a mass rally held in Tel Aviv on November 12, calling for an overhaul of the system.

On November 14, four days after the official publication of the election results and after holding formal consultations with all the parties elected to the 12th Knesset, Herzog announced that, since a majority of their representatives (including both Shas and the Aguda) had recommended that the Likud candidate form the new government, and since the Likud was the largest Knesset faction, he was accordingly entrusting Yitzhak Shamir with the task.

Herzog took the opportunity of the announcement to urge "a thorough examination of the Election Law in order to ensure the public its full democratic rights." The president also indicated his own preference when he noted that the "will of the people," as he understood it, "suggests a longing for unity in the face of the hazards that lie in wait for us from without and the threat of a schism from within." He also voiced his concern regarding the dangers facing both "our society's Zionist character" and "the unity of the Jewish people," pointing especially to the "unprecedented attack . . . [launched] on a segment of the population because of its religious character." In his reply, Prime Minister Shamir agreed that a "national unity government . . . can [still] provide an answer to the country's needs and problems." He also referred specifically to "the voices of concern and apprehension that are reaching us from diaspora Jewry, especially from U.S. Jewry . . . on the issue of [the "Who is a Jew?" legislation]."

Indeed, as early as November 9, 27 national Jewish organizations in the United States had issued a joint statement warning that passage of the amendment to the Law of Return, which was being demanded by elements among the ultra-Orthodox as a condition for joining a coalition, would do "enormous damage, actual and symbolic" to Diaspora Jewry. (The so-called Who is a Jew? amendment, which was periodically submitted to the Knesset and routinely defeated—most recently five months earlier, on June 14, by a vote of 60–53—would bar non-Orthodox converts to Judaism from gaining automatic entry to Israel under the Law of Return, thus implicitly but effectively delegitimating Judaism's Conservative and Reform
streams.) With the publication of the statement by the American Jewish groups, the battle line was definitively drawn between the Judaism that was dominant in the pluralistic American society and the establishment Judaism of the Israeli polity. The statement by the American Jewish groups took as its point of departure a reaffirmation of American Jewry's “devotion to the State and the people of Israel” and stressed that “we are one people, with a single destiny.” It continued:

We reject any effort to divide our people by legislative action of the Knesset. All Jews, including those of us who are not citizens of Israel, are affected by the possibility of a change in the definition of Who is a Jew under Israel law, either through amending the Law of Return or adoption of the Rabbinical Courts bill. [The latter would give the Orthodox rabbinical courts absolute sovereignty in all personal status matters, without the possibility of recourse to the civil courts.]

These were but two of the demands of the religious parties that would be agreed to by the Likud in the following weeks before Shamir made a last-minute switch and opted for a coalition with Labor—a move that infuriated the religious parties and left scars that would not easily heal. Other demands were for ministerial portfolios including education (a portfolio sought by both Shas and the NRP), housing, interior, labor, and religious affairs; the chairmanship of the powerful Knesset Finance Committee and a series of other appointments at the rank of deputy minister; “budgetary parity” in education and large-scale allocations to various haredi institutions, at an estimated cost of NIS 500 million to the Treasury; a law enabling local municipalities to regulate the opening of businesses on the Sabbath and holy days; a law, based on a British Mandate ordinance of 1919, under which religious conversion would require the approval of the head of the community which the convert was joining—i.e., the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate in the case of Jews; a law restricting missionary activity; a law prohibiting damage to burial sites (aimed at archaeological digs); a law granting amnesty to the members of the Jewish terrorist underground still in prison and to other Israelis who had attacked Palestinians in situations of “security distress” (a proposal also supported by MKs from the ultranationalist lists); passage of the “pork law”; enforcement of the abortions law; a commitment from the Likud not to change the electoral system; and assurance that the status quo pertaining to the Sabbath and to the drafting of yeshivah students would be upheld. Agudat Israel also let it be known that it had been promised the chairmanship of the State Lottery, whose revenues were earmarked for various deserving institutions.

Shamir found himself in deep water when it emerged that some of the demands put forward by Likud’s natural allies in the ultranationalist camp were incompatible with ultra-Orthodox conditions. In the realm of military service, former chief of staff Rafael Eitan’s small Tzomet party was vehement in its insistence that exemptions granted to yeshivah students be drastically reduced if not eliminated altogether. The ultranationalists’ demand for new settlements in the occupied territories would add hundreds of millions of shekels to the “bill” submitted by the religious parties. Even within his own ranks Shamir faced patronage problems, notably how to divide the
two senior portfolios of defense and foreign affairs among Ariel Sharon, David Levy, and Shamir’s close ally Moshe Arens.

LABOR-LIKUD TALKS

It was in large measure to extricate himself from this mass of mutually irreconcilable claims and counterclaims that Shamir invited the Alignment to hold talks on the possible re-formation of the national unity government. The first meeting between the two sides, attended by both Shamir and Peres, took place on November 15—the same day, as it happened, on which the PLO declared the “State of Palestine” in Algiers.

Yet these negotiations too immediately floundered due to conflicting demands and personal animosities. Shamir would not agree to another rotation in the premiership and refused even to entertain the possibility of Peres’s returning to the Foreign Ministry, a stance for which he found a perhaps not unexpected ally in Labor’s Yitzhak Rabin. In an Israel TV interview on November 16, Rabin stunned the Peres camp by proposing not only that the Likud-Labor coalition be reconstituted under Shamir without rotation, but that the Likud should be given “a chance to implement its peace plan” and that to this end, for the sake of harmony, it would be preferable if the Likud held the foreign-affairs portfolio as well as the premiership. Peres was relegated to the Treasury. Rabin had consulted with no one in the party before making public his audacious proposal, but once a figure of his standing had revealed his terms to the entire nation, they could not easily be retracted.

However, another full month was required before Shamir accepted even this scheme. In the meantime, opposition in the American Jewish community to the “Who is a Jew?” amendment—which Shamir had assured Agudat Israel would be passed within six weeks of the government’s installation—was fast becoming a groundswell. The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel’s ambassador to the United States, Moshe Arad, who was the immediate target of the outraged reaction of American Jews, had taken the unusual move of attempting to intervene in internal policy-making. “I implore you to discuss and reassess the grave repercussions which the law would have on the relations between Israel and the Jewish community, and as a direct consequence, the ramifications on our standing in the United States,” Arad cabled Shamir and Peres. Nor did the American Jewish community confine its protests to the United States or to backroom diplomacy, as in the past. In an effort to prevent what they feared would be an irrevocable schism, with unforeseeable consequences for both Israel and the entire Jewish people, the American Jewish leadership intervened openly in the formation of an Israeli government.

A large ad in the Israeli Hebrew press on November 21 declaring that “the unity of the Jewish people is in the balance” called on “all Members of Knesset and the political leadership in Israel not to pass any legislation that would change the
definition of 'who is a Jew.' ” The ad asserted bluntly, “Your activity will determine the future relationship between the people of Israel and the Jewish people in the diaspora.” The signatories were the United Jewish Appeal of the United States and Canada, the Conference of Jewish Federations of North America, and the United Israel Appeal. On the same day a delegation of these organizations arrived in Israel for meetings with Israeli political and religious leaders. A communiqué issued by the Prime Minister’s Office following Shamir’s talk with the group (November 22) noted that they had expressed their “grave concern” at the proposed legislation and had “asked the prime minister to remove the issue from the political agenda.” Shamir had replied that “there is no question whatsoever of disqualifying any Jew” and had attempted to reduce the issue to a mere technicality, devoid of implications: “The matter under consideration,” he noted, “is the registration of converts from abroad.” Two other high-powered delegations also arrived in Israel to lobby against the amendment.

On November 24, Labor’s Leadership Bureau decided that no basis existed for entering into negotiations with the Likud on the formation of a new government and that any such negotiations would require the bureau’s prior approval. Peres and his aides continued to hold contacts with the religious parties and came under fire from the Likud for trying to form a government even though the president had entrusted that task to Shamir. Again, the main beneficiaries of the competition were the religious parties.

On November 30, six days after its initial decision, Labor’s Leadership Bureau voted—against the recommendation of both Peres and Rabin—to reject another offer by Prime Minister Shamir to enter into negotiations on forming a government in which Shamir would hold the premiership for the full four-year period. The vote was 61–57 with one abstention. The general bewilderment at the course of events was indicated by the conflicting analyses of what the vote meant. Some commentators read it as a blow to the veteran leadership, while others thought that Peres had engineered the outcome in order to improve his bargaining position vis-à-vis the Likud by playing “hard to get” and enabling him to demand a higher price for acquiescence—specifically, a rotation agreement.

It then emerged that Peres and his confidant, the newly elected MK Dr. Yosef Beilin, had concluded a secret deal with Agudat Israel which, while insufficient to enable Peres to form a government, would preclude a Shamir government without Labor. At a stormy meeting of Labor’s outgoing ministers on December 2, an outraged Yitzhak Rabin pulled out two documents which he said were the secret agreements cooked up by Peres and Beilin with the Aguda behind the backs of the party’s leadership and without its authorization. Peres’s concessions to Agudat Israel rivaled those of Shamir, including a pledge to recommend favorably to the party’s Central Committee legislation to amend the Law of Return, with a timetable for its implementation.

On December 5, Shamir asked for and received from President Herzog an additional three weeks to form a government. In his statement granting Shamir the
extension, Herzog gave voice to the "sense of frustration, helplessness, humiliation and shame, as well as grave concern," that he said was felt by the "great majority" of Israelis in the face of the coalition negotiations. According to Ha'aretz, Herzog held intensive contacts with political leaders and private talks with both Peres and Labor-party secretary-general Uzi Baram, imploring them to overcome factional and party differences and resume negotiations with the Likud for a "unity" government. By this stage, Peres was more than willing, as it was clear that he could not form a government, but Baram was steadfast in his principled objection (he would later decline a ministerial portfolio for the same reason). Thus, as bickering among the religious parties themselves continued—the latest snag was that both the Aguda and Degel Hatorah insisted on heading a promised new Education Ministry department that was to control the ultra-Orthodox school system—and Shamir seemed ready to pay whatever price was demanded for joining the coalition, Labor's Central Committee voted on December 8 by a 2–1 margin (637–348) to renew the coalition talks with the Likud. President Herzog's public and private endeavors were instrumental in this development.

Nevertheless, two additional weeks were required to complete the negotiations—the very period in which the dramatic U.S.-PLO rapprochement was played out. Among the stumbling blocks that the Likud and Labor teams ran up against were Labor's insistence on receiving the chairmanship of the Knesset's Finance Committee in order to ensure a harmonious rapport with the Finance Ministry which Peres was destined to head; Labor's refusal to accept Likud's consent to the Tehiya plan for the establishment of ten settlements a year in the occupied territories (a major problem in the Likud-Labor talks was that until the very end the Likud wanted to retain the option of setting up a religious-right-wing coalition and had given dozens of undertakings to the parties in question which were unacceptable to the Alignment); and Labor's demand to retain the education portfolio, which Shamir had already earmarked for the NRP.

The one issue that was studiously avoided by Likud and Labor was the intifada. Yet it was Yasir Arafat's iteration of Washington's conditions for the start of a U.S.-PLO dialogue and Shultz's announcement on December 14 that such a dialogue would begin that provided the final catalyst for the conclusion of the coalition talks and the formation of a second consecutive unity government.

Symbolically, December 14 also saw another significant stage in the battle of U.S. Jewry against the mooted amendment to the Law of Return, a matter that was not resolved until the signing of the Likud-Labor coalition agreement five days later. On that day a petition decrying the amendment, sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations and signed by 100,000 North American Jews, was presented to Prime Minister Shamir by a representative delegation from 12 American Jewish communities. When Shamir resurfaced 48 hours after disappearing from public view—in the immediate aftermath of Shultz's announcement—to rail against the American move, he was determined to conclude the coalition-making process and set up the broad government that he believed Israel needed. Such a coalition was essential, he
told the Knesset when he presented the government for its approval the following week, in order to rebuff "the massive propaganda and diplomatic offensive being conducted against Israel in the international diplomatic arena by the terrorist organizations and their friends and supporters."

To rope in Labor, Shamir agreed to the establishment of eight new settlements instead of the 40 he had promised Tehiya; Labor received the chairmanship of the Finance Committee; and a series of checks and balances was instituted in order to ensure that no major policy decisions could be made by Likud without Labor's consent. A so-called parity committee composed of the three senior ministers of each party was to be established to oversee major policy decisions. This informal but institutionalized body would supplement both the 26-member cabinet and the 12-member inner cabinet. Likud and Labor agreed that, in the event of the government's being toppled by a vote of no confidence in the Knesset, neither party would attempt to form a new narrow-based government, but that a bill would be submitted jointly to dissolve the House and hold an election within 100 days. It was further stipulated that Prime Minister Shamir could not fire a Labor minister without first consulting with Vice Premier Shimon Peres. The coalition agreement was signed on December 19.

Stormy sessions ensued when the two parties' central committees convened to ratify the accord. On December 20, the Likud Central Committee approved the coalition agreement by a margin of 56–44 percent, though not before Ariel Sharon and Yitzhak Modai—both of whom stood to lose out in terms of prestigious ministerial portfolios in a broad coalition—had castigated Shamir for breaking written contractual agreements with the religious parties and for showing "moral turpitude" in not forming a narrow government. Labor's Central Committee, meeting the following day, easily approved the coalition agreement despite the impassioned opposition of the party's young doves, led by Secretary-General Uzi Baram, but the meeting degenerated into cacophonous name-calling when it emerged that Peres had failed to name a single woman among his party's cabinet ministers.

The ultra-Orthodox parties hurled a good deal of invective at Shamir, and Degel Hatorah actually initiated court proceedings over the Likud's "breach of contract"; while it dropped the case, the party refused to enter the coalition. Both Shas and Agudat Israel soon swallowed their pride and joined the coalition, as did the NRP, all hoping to cash in on their pledges from Shamir even though the rules of the game had suddenly changed. The ultranationalist bloc (from which only Tehiya had finalized an agreement with the Likud) joined the left-wing parties in the opposition—which totaled fewer MKs than there were ministers in the cabinet.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT

The Basic Guidelines of the new government, as presented for the Knesset's ratification by Prime Minister Shamir on December 22, were virtually a replay of
the 1984 policy principles, despite the developments of the intervening years, particularly in the occupied territories. Following the most inconclusive election in the country's history and hard on the heels of bitterly divisive and rancorous coalition negotiations, Shamir declared that "we urgently need national unity." Israel, he pronounced, would "spare no effort" to advance the peace process, which could come about "only through direct dialogue." A peace settlement would have to ensure Israel's security—which ruled out "a complete withdrawal to the suffocating borders of 1967"—while enabling "the Arab inhabitants of Eretz-Israel . . . to conduct their affairs with as much freedom as possible." In the same vein, Shamir called on "the Arab residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District" to desist from "violent means [which] will achieve nothing" and to join Israel in "seeking to create conditions of peaceful coexistence" that would "assure liberty and prosperity for you and your children."

At the same time, the prime minister asserted that the Jewish settlements in the territories "fulfill an important role in the realm of defense and in preventing the establishment of a PLO state in Eretz-Israel," apparently unwittingly contradicting himself, however, when he added that it was "imperative for the IDF and the [other] security branches to guaranteee their security." Shamir pledged that "we will expand settlement throughout Eretz-Israel." He also took the opportunity to express the government's disagreement with the U.S. decision to launch a dialogue with the PLO. "We continue to hope that the U.S. will reconsider its decision," he said, while lauding the "unprecedented developments" in Israeli-U.S. bilateral relations during the Reagan years.

On the "Who is a Jew?" question, Shamir described American Jewry as "a faithful and vital ally" but also reiterated his view that no more was involved than "registering converts." Even though he had signed an agreement with Agudat Israel pledging to pass the amendment to the Law of Return within six weeks, Shamir said that "false impressions" had been created that had generated concern among Diaspora Jewry. "It goes without saying," he said, "that there is no intention whatsoever of delegitimizing any Jew." He urged "all streams and elements" in the Diaspora to make a "special effort," adding that "with good will it is possible to find a basis on which we can all unite."

Although the 12th Knesset contained no fewer than 38 new members, including 7 from the Likud and 14 from Labor, the composition of the cabinet presented by Prime Minister Shamir evoked a sense of *déjà vu*, since the majority of the ministers had served in the outgoing government, many holding the same posts. Among the newcomers were Shas’s Rabbi Arye Deri, aged 29—the youngest cabinet minister in the country’s history (he was not an MK)—who took the helm at the powerful Interior Ministry from which his Shas colleague Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, now relegated to the small Absorption Ministry, had resigned under the previous government for reasons of conscience; and the Likud’s Dan Meridor, the new minister of justice, who, along with Binyamin Begin, Benjamin Netanyahu, Roni Milo, and Ehud Olmert was one of the so-called “princes” in the party who came from veteran
Herut families. Milo and Olmert also assumed ministerial rank for the first time, Milo heading a brand-new Ministry of Environmental Protection and Olmert given responsibility for the "Israeli-Arab sector." Labor, for all its vaunted overhaul and "young" image, fielded only two new ministers, neither of whom could by any stretch of the imagination be termed "a new face" (Avraham Katz-Oz, the outgoing deputy agriculture minister, took over that portfolio, and Rafael Edri, a veteran party functionary, was named minister without portfolio). In the NRP a mini-upheaval occurred when, on December 25, the party's Central Committee chose Zevulun Hammer, from the party's moderate wing, by a large margin over the party's number-one candidate in the elections, the hawkish Avner Shaki, to serve as religious affairs minister, the same post he had held in the outgoing government.

Within three days of the cabinet's installment, the coalition agreement was broken. The framers of that document, evidently seeking to achieve hyper-parity, had provided for deputy ministers from the Likud to serve in the finance and defense ministries, both held by Labor, and for a deputy minister from Labor to serve in the Foreign Ministry, held by a Likud appointee. However, Defense Minister Rabin balked at this arrangement, and the new cabinet, meeting for the first time on December 25, appointed Likud MK Benjamin Netanyahu, former ambassador to the UN, as deputy foreign minister and Peres's confidant, MK Yossi Beilin, as deputy finance minister. The cabinet also created the Ministry for Environmental Protection and appointed 11 of the 12 members of the inner cabinet (up from 10 in the previous government), 6 each from Likud and Labor to ensure perfect balance. The Likud appointees, besides Shamir, were Arens, Levy, Sharon, Modai, and Nissim; while Labor went with Peres, Rabin, Navon, Bar-Lev, and Weizman. The sixth Labor member was not appointed, as Peres had not yet decided between Moshe Shahal and Mordechai Gur. (Shahal later got the appointment.) On December 26, Peres suffered a setback within his own party when his candidate for chairman of the Knesset caucus, MK David Libai, was beaten by Haim Ramon, one of the young doves in the party who had opposed Labor's entry into the national unity government.

National Security

The deleterious impact of the intifada on Israel's national security was direct and immediate, with the indirect and long-term consequences not yet clear.

The first to be affected were reserve soldiers in combat units. On April 11, the deputy chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Ehud Barak, told reporters that such reservists would serve up to 62 days in 1988—double the normal yearly call-up—with most of the time allotted to duty in the occupied territories. Clearly this would affect the scheduled training program for the reserve forces, Barak explained, but the arrangement would result in minimal harm to the training and maneuvers of the regular forces. Barak said that the first four months of the uprising had already cost the IDF tens of millions of shekels which had not been taken account of in budgetary
THE NATIONAL UNITY CABINET
(installed on December 22, 1988)

Prime Minister
Yitzhak Shamir (Likud-Herut)
Shimon Peres (Labor)

Vice Premier & Finance Minister
Yitzhak Navon (Labor)

Deputy Premier & Minister of Education and Culture
David Levy (Likud-Herut)
Avraham Katz-Oz (Labor)

Deputy Premier & Minister of Construction and Housing
Gad Yaakobi (Labor)
Yitzhak Rabin (Labor)

Agriculture
Yitzhak Modai (Likud-Liberals)
Moshe Shahal (Labor)

Communications
Roni Milo (Likud-Herut)
Moshe Arens (Likud-Herut)

Defense
Yaakov Tzur (Labor)
Yitzhak Peretz (Shas)

Economy and Planning
Ariel Sharon (Likud-Herut)

Energy and Infrastructure
Yitzhak Shamir

Environmental Protection
Haim Bar-Lev (Labor)

Foreign Affairs
Yitzhak Shamir

Health
Yitzhak Shamir

Immigrant Absorption
Ezer Weizman (Labor-Yahad)

Industry and Trade
Gideon Patt (Likud-Liberals)

Interior
Moshe Katzav (Likud-Herut)

Justice
Rafael Edri (Labor)

Labor and Social Affairs
Mordechai Gur (Labor)

Police
Moshe Nissim (Likud-Liberals)

Religious Affairs
Ehud Olmert (Likud-Herut)

Science and Development
Moshe Nissim (Likud-Liberals)

Tourism

Transport

Without Portfolio

1The establishment of this new ministry was ratified by the Knesset on December 27.

2Rabbi Moshe Ze'ev Feldman from Agudat Israel—which traditionally refused to participate in the cabinet—was appointed deputy minister for labor and social affairs on December 25 to run the ministry on a day-to-day basis, although Prime Minister Shamir formally bore ministerial responsibility for its functioning.

3On December 27, the Knesset endorsed Zevulun Hammer (NRP) as religious affairs minister and Avner Shaki (NRP) as minister without portfolio.
planning. His hope was that the cost of putting down the intifada would not affect the army’s procurement and development plans.

However, in May, Maj. Gen. Uri Saguy, the chief of the Ground Forces Command (GFC), was quoted in the IDF’s weekly Bamahaneh as stating that the ongoing deployment in the territories had “seriously impaired the basic-training level” of the IDF and that only a decline in the intensity of the uprising would enable the GFC to “stabilize the training schedule for the regular army.” Two months later, the head of the Logistics Branch, Maj. Gen. Menahem Einan, stated that if the IDF did not receive a “special supplement” to its current budget “as compensation for expenses arising from the intifada,” he would “recommend that the IDF’s weapons procurement program be halted.” Einan said that the IDF lacked funds to achieve even its “minimum essential goals” and warned against concentrating inordinately on the events in the territories and in southern Lebanon at the expense of maintaining war readiness.

Indeed, a major concern of the High Command was that the Arab states would perceive Israel’s reaction to the uprising—the deliberate refusal to quell it swiftly and brutally using full-scale battlefield means—as a sign of weakness. This might undermine a pillar of Israel’s national-security doctrine—the maintenance of a credible deterrence vis-à-vis the Arab states. In the territories themselves, the behavior of the population, their readiness to confront fully armed troops with stones, and in some cases to attack them at close quarters, showed that the Palestinians had overcome a fear barrier, with a concomitant erosion of Israeli deterrent capability. The IDF’s response was to impose ever more stringent punitive measures. Furthermore, Israeli military planners would have to add to their various war scenarios the distinct possibility that the inhabitants of the territories would stage mass demonstrations and engage in various forms of violence during a full-scale war, forcing the IDF to commit troops to this “front” and reducing its potential for maneuver in the territories.

Already in 1988, General Barak told the Press Club on December 4, the IDF had committed an average of 10,000 troops per day to the territories, accounting for 3.5 million workdays of soldiers and officers. Barak added that the IDF’s deployment in the territories was adversely affecting the training continuity of regular units and military exercises for the reserves. Nevertheless, he said, “We are convinced that the IDF’s combat ability has not been harmed.”

Barak and others on the General Staff also dismissed the phenomenon of refusal to serve in the territories for reasons of conscience as insignificant. Yesh Gvul (There Is a Border/Limit), the group formed during the Lebanon War, again took the lead among organizations advocating refusal to serve in the territories, maintaining a support system for those who were jailed for their action. Although only several dozen persons formally refused to do reserve duty in the territories, serving military-prison terms of up to a month—in some cases more than once—many others avoided duty in the territories through internal arrangements with their unit commanders, serving elsewhere instead. Toward the end of the year it was reported that
the police were conducting a secret criminal investigation into the activities of Yesh Gvul on suspicion that the group was engaged in unlawful incitement. According to a local Jerusalem paper, the investigation had been ordered by the attorney general following a request by the legal adviser of the Shin Bet. The action was taken after Yesh Gvul published a booklet instructing soldiers how to proceed if conscience prevented them from serving in the territories. Left-wing MKs, most of whom disagreed with the tactics of Yesh Gvul, demanded that the investigation be halted, calling Yesh Gvul a legitimate protest group. On December 28, two of the organization’s activists were interrogated by the police.

The debate over the territories also led to quasi-protest movements from within the establishment. At the end of March, a group of 34 major generals, 86 brigadier generals, 115 colonels—all retired from the IDF—and some 200 experts in related spheres formed the Council for Peace and Security, headed by former chief of military intelligence Aharon Yariv. This group, which claimed to be nonpartisan but was identified in the public mind with the Labor party, had as its slogan: “Israel’s security depends on the IDF and not on the territories.” The council ran ads in the Israeli press calling for a distinction to be drawn between a “security border” and a “political border.” In their view, the continued occupation of the territories undermined the IDF’s war preparedness, eroded the national consensus which was essential in a genuine war situation, and, by reducing the prospects for peace, heightened the likelihood of war. In August the inevitable countergroup was formed. As its name—Officers and Academics for Security and Peace—suggested, this group, which included another former chief of intelligence, MK Yehoshua Saguy (Likud), placed “security ahead of peace.” The aim of this body was to convince the public of the “vital importance of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights for Israel’s security.”

A public-opinion survey on national security sponsored by Tel Aviv University’s Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies (of which Aharon Yariv was the director) found that 57 percent favored the annexation to Israel of the West Bank and Gaza (up from 54 percent in 1986)—part of what the survey directors (headed by Prof. Asher Arian of Tel Aviv University) described as “a somewhat more right-wing tendency” in the country as compared with the previous poll two years earlier. (The survey, which was published June 1, was conducted six months earlier, during the initial, mass-demonstrations stage of the intifada.) The proportion of those who thought Israeli policy in the territories was too soft was up by 6 percent from 1986 and stood at 51 percent. Overall, the survey concluded, while Israelis continued to believe “by a very large margin” that the country could successfully overcome the threats it faced, “clear evidence” existed of an “erosion of that confidence” as compared with the earlier poll.

Israelis' confidence may have been boosted by the launching, on September 19, of Ofek-1, described officially in a press release issued by Israel Aircraft Industries as “an experimental technological satellite,” and by MK Prof. Yuval Ne’eman, chairman of the Israel Space Agency, as Israel’s “calling card to the space age.” The
150-kilogram octagonally shaped satellite, lifted into space by a three-stage Shavit rocket, orbited the earth elliptically once every 90 minutes, from a perigee of 250 km. (over the Middle East) to an apogee of 1,000 km. Israel thus joined a select group of countries with satellite-launching capability. According to Ne’eman, Ofek-1 was a strictly civilian project and was not a spy satellite. It was expected to burn up after some weeks in space, though not before feeding Israeli scientists a wealth of data. According to Reuven Pedatzur, a defense affairs analyst for Ha’a- retz, with the launching of Ofek-1 Israel showed for the first time that it possessed medium-range ballistic missile capability.

**LEBANON**

Ballistic missiles could be of no help, however, in combating the numerous attacks and infiltration attempts in and from Lebanon in 1988. Security personnel pointed to the intifada to account for the upsurge in hostile activity from Lebanon during the year. The thinking was that the PLO and others wanted to demonstrate their solidarity with the uprising, and perhaps open a “second front” by stepping up their activity in Lebanon (as well as from Egypt and Jordan). Thus 1988 saw more than 630 incidents involving the IDF or the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA), the Israeli-supported militia in the security zone. (On November 7, SLA commander Gen. Antoine Lahad was seriously wounded when he was shot at close range by a 21-year-old woman from the Lebanese Communist party.) There were 24 infiltration attempts across the border from Lebanon into northern Israel, all of which were foiled either in the Israeli-declared “security zone” in southern Lebanon or at the security fence along the border; this compared with 10 attempts in 1987. Five of the forays were carried out by Yasir Arafat’s Fatah organization, but no Fatah squads were involved in such incidents after November 24, as Arafat moved toward a dialogue with the United States. Katyushas were also fired sporadically into upper Galilee, and in one such incident (March 3), five persons were hurt when a rocket hit a house.

As in previous years, the Israel Air Force was the spearhead of antiterrorist activity in Lebanon. Besides the standard targets, on August 8, the IAF bombed a Voice of Palestine radio station in southern Lebanon that had been broadcasting instructions to the leadership of the intifada. The Israel Navy was also active, sinking or intercepting a number of vessels with terrorists aboard.

 Israeli ground forces were more active in 1988 than at any time since the IDF’s withdrawal from Lebanon in June 1985, and as a result sustained more fatalities. Three Israeli paratroopers, two of them officers, were killed and 17 others wounded in a two-tiered IDF sweep in southern Lebanon on May 2–4, aimed at restoring Israel’s deterrent capability in the area following a series of attacks on the IDF and the SLA. The sweep operation included an attack on the village of Maidoun, some 3 kilometers north of the security zone in the Beka’a Valley, in an area occupied
by Syrian forces and large numbers of Hezbollah gunmen, including hundreds of Iranians. The village had been deserted by its inhabitants and transformed by Hezbollah into a heavily fortified stronghold. All the IDF casualties in the operation occurred in the heavy fighting that erupted in Maidoun. After the raid, which received worldwide publicity when ABC-TV interrupted its regular programming to announce that 2,500 Israeli troops had entered Lebanon—a figure which turned out to be highly exaggerated—it emerged that Defense Minister Rabin had not informed anyone in the cabinet about the operation. Ministers from both Labor and Likud were critical of this state of affairs and called for a review of the procedures for decision making on military operations—particularly if the possibility, however hypothetical, existed of intervention by Syrian forces. Rabin said the raid had been carried out within the parameters of ongoing government policy and therefore needed no special approval.

Rabin himself was critical of the IDF's performance in the army's first deep-penetration raid since the early stages of the Lebanon War. On the night of December 8, navy commandos, along with troops from the elite Golani infantry brigade, struck at a base of Ahmed Jibril's Popular Front/General Command organization situated northeast of Damour, 19 kilometers south of Beirut. The troops were put ashore from the sea and were airlifted out the next morning by helicopter after killing some 20 terrorists, wounding dozens, and destroying a training site and an ammunition dump. An Israeli battalion commander was killed in the raid and three soldiers were wounded. Four Israeli soldiers were missing when Chief of Staff Dan Shomron, concerned about a possible clash with Syrian troops in broad daylight, gave the order to take the main force out. The four were later located and extricated in a daring helicopter operation. Shomron was criticized for violating a hallowed IDF tradition of never leaving soldiers behind in enemy territory. Rabin was quoted as telling the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee: "If I had known how the operation in Lebanon would develop, I would not have authorized it."

On December 18, the IDF announced that three days earlier yet another force had ventured outside the security zone, in the area of Tibnin, this time returning with four prisoners, including two senior commanders from the Believers Resistance Front, a radical Shi'ite group believed to have been involved in the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers in 1986. Two of the four suspects were released on December 17 following their interrogation.

Other incidents in which Israeli soldiers were killed included the following: On February 4, two 19-year-old paratroopers, Eliezer Sheffer, a yeshivah student from Herzliyah, and Avshalom Bashri, from Moshav Kfar Zeitim, fell in a gun battle with terrorists on the Israel-Lebanon border near Kibbutz Yiftah; on February 22, Sgt. Gavriel Permutti, aged 20, from Herzliyah, and Cpl. Amir Siedner, aged 19, from Jerusalem, were killed and two other soldiers were wounded when their tank hit a powerful roadside bomb, responsibility for the attack being claimed by the Believers Resistance Front; and in the year's worst single outrage, eight soldiers were killed—ranging in age from 19 to 44 and in rank from private to major—and seven
wounded, on October 19, when a Hezbollah suicide car-bomber managed to get his vehicle to a point near the border checkpoint just outside Metullah. Two days after the car-bomb attack, the IAF struck heavily at Hezbollah and Palestinian targets in southern Lebanon, and on the following day it was announced that the gang responsible for the attack had been captured following intensive intelligence work by the security forces aided by the SLA.

This and other incidents that followed in the coming days, evidently motivated by the impending Israeli and U.S. elections and the scheduled Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers, elicited calls for Israel to expand the security zone. However, this idea was rejected by Defense Minister Rabin, who told the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee on October 25 that to enlarge the zone would be counterproductive because it would exacerbate relations with the local population and upset the "delicate balance" in southern Lebanon.

SECURITY TRIALS

Two trials relating to national security were in the news in 1988. The trial of Mordechai Vanunu, a former technician at the Dimona Nuclear Research Center who was accused of passing top-secret information about the facility to the London Sunday Times, was concluded. (For the background, see AJYB 1989, pp. 390–392, and AJYB 1988, pp. 373–375.) Following additional testimony, including that of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, one of the founders of the country's nuclear-research program, and by Prof. George Quester, of the University of Maryland, an expert on international nuclear policy, Vanunu was convicted of the charges against him on March 24 and sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment on March 27. The sentence was two years less than what the prosecution had demanded and 37 years less than the total maximum accumulated prison term that could have been handed down separately for each count of aggravated espionage, treason, and disclosing state secrets.

The entire seven-month trial was held in camera, and only one page of the 60-page verdict was made public. This made it clear that the judges had rejected the defense's argument that Vanunu had acted from ideological motives because, as they wrote, "some of the most appalling crimes in human history were perpetrated for ideological reasons," and "the danger posed by ideological criminals is perhaps even greater than that of other criminals." It was also noted that the very fact of Vanunu's having given information to an unauthorized source constituted a crime, irrespective of whether the information itself was correct. The judges explained their decision not to impose the full sentence requested by the prosecution by citing mitigating circumstances in Vanunu's favor: his full cooperation with the investigators, the fact that he had been held in total isolation since his arrest and was likely to remain so, and "traces of remorse" in Vanunu's final statement. On March 28, Vanunu's lawyer appealed the sentence to the Supreme Court.
On January 10, it was disclosed that a 42-year-old Tel Aviv businessman, Shabtai Kalmanovitch, had been arrested by the Shin Bet on December 23, 1987, on suspicion of engaging in espionage for the Soviet Union. Kalmanovitch, well-known in high social and political circles, had immigrated to Israel from Lithuania in 1971. In the 1970s he had been involved with the most senior levels in Israel that dealt with Soviet Jewry, and in his subsequent career as an international financier he had established contacts with cabinet ministers and former ranking military personnel. The news of his arrest stunned not a few members of the Israeli political establishment. On December 15, following a three-month trial held in camera, Kalmanovitch was sentenced to a nine-year prison term in a plea-bargaining deal in which he confessed to spying for the Soviet Union and having contact with a KGB agent.

**International Relations**

Israel had to cope with severe criticism in 1988 for its activities in the territories, but oddly, those voices were loudest from Israel's allies among the Western democracies, whereas countries in the Eastern bloc, traditionally hostile to Israel, muted their criticism and moved rapidly toward a normalization of relations.

**UNITED STATES**

Relations with Washington were dominated in the first half of the year by the peace initiative of Secretary of State George Shultz (see above for the details). The mission encountered fierce opposition from Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the Likud and died a lingering death. Washington's year-end decision to talk to the PLO—a move whose logic contradicted the essence of the Shultz plan but seemed more in harmony with the unfolding events generated by the intifada—was hotly disputed by most of the Israeli political establishment.

Overall, as in past years, the attitude underlying U.S. policy toward Israel could be described as much bark but very little bite. The barking was once again triggered by Israeli actions in the territories, but was louder than in past years due to the uprising. Thus, the year began with the United States protesting Israel's deportation of Palestinians, voting in favor of a UN Security Council resolution warning Israel against carrying out expulsions (January 5), and then abstaining (January 14) in a council resolution condemning the expulsion of nine Palestinians which was passed 14-0. Following the first vote, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing "regret and disappointment" at the U.S. stance on the resolution, "which does not contribute to the reestablishment of calm or to a furthering of the peace process." Foreign Minister Shimon Peres saw the vote as a "grave deviation" from the traditional U.S. position. However, in a typical pattern, Secretary of State Shultz himself assuaged such concerns, thus neutralizing whatever the intended effect of
the U.S. vote had been, when he told a Washington press conference that “the U.S. regards its friendship and the strength of its relationship with Israel as a key and unshakable relationship. No one should interpret a vote as meaning anything else.”

Shultz also took the opportunity to note that while it was manifestly Israel’s “duty to maintain law and order” in the territories, Washington believed that this could be accomplished “without the use of lethal means.” Late in the month the State Department expressed its concern over the new Israeli riot-control measures announced by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, reiterating that Israel could achieve its goal by employing “humane measures which do not result in civilian casualties.”

A rare concrete step taken by the State Department—an “advisory” cautioning tourists not to visit the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, issued on the eve of the Passover-Easter holiday season—infuriated Tourism (and Justice) Minister Avraham Sharir. He accused the United States of “once again stabbing tourism to Israel in the back.”

In mid-April, following three visits by Secretary of State Shultz to the region in pursuit of his peace mission, the United States stepped up its rhetoric regarding Israeli actions in suppressing the intifada. Speaking at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, U.S. ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering asserted that if Israel wished to continue enjoying close ties with the United States, it was “critical” for “the primacy of the rule of law” to be upheld in the territories. In Washington, the State Department condemned the deportation of eight more Palestinians on April 11, an action which, in the U.S. view, contravened the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949; however, in the Security Council, the United States vetoed a resolution calling on Israel to allow the deportees to return.

The most stinging attack to date on Israeli policy—and the bluntest warning of the possible consequences—came a week after the IDF had issued deportation orders to 25 more Palestinians. On August 23, Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead told Oded Eran, a senior official in the Israeli embassy in Washington, that the United States considered expulsion an “unduly harsh punishment under any circumstances.” If Israel did not “reconsider” the newly issued orders, or “refrain from carrying them out,” and in general change its position on this issue, Whitehead said, “damage to our bilateral relations will occur.” In response, Foreign Minister Peres stated that no “policy of deportation” existed, “only individual cases” necessitated by the security situation. (Nonetheless, there were no more deportations in 1988, although the orders against the 25 were not revoked.)

In mid-September—halfway between the collapse of Secretary of State Shultz’s peace initiative and his decision to start talks with the PLO—the secretary took the opportunity of a speech marking the tenth anniversary of the Camp David accords to sum up the Reagan administration’s policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While rejecting the idea of an independent Palestinian state, Shultz also ruled out Israel’s retention of all the territories. Israel, he said, “must be prepared to withdraw—as Resolution 242 says—from territories occupied in the [1967 war].” On Israeli measures to suppress the uprising, the secretary of state acknowledged that
even though it was Israel's "responsibility to maintain law and order" in the territories, this must be achieved within certain parameters of behavior. Specifically, Shultz asserted that the United States would "vigorously" oppose attempts to carry out a "transfer" of Arabs from the territories, and especially to Jordan, which had a "strong national identity of its own" and therefore was "not a Palestinian state." (Shultz was responding to calls from ultranationalist circles in Israel to solve the issue of the territories by declaring Jordan the Palestinian "homeland," since the majority of its population was already of Palestinian origin.) The secretary of state was unusually blunt in his criticism of some of the more severe measures resorted to by Israel in the territories, and of the logic underlying them: "[Israel] cannot claim there is no one to talk to, while suppressing political expression [in the territories] and arresting or deporting those who speak out—even those who speak in moderate terms."

Prime Minister Shamir played out his part in the ritual by responding that at bottom the United States and Israel agreed on the substantive goal—Shultz, he pointed out, had affirmed Israel's "right and duty" to restore order in the territories—but disagreed over how that goal should be achieved. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, in contrast, called Shultz's speech "very balanced."

Peres's successor as foreign minister, Moshe Arens, saw fit to take Israel's major ally to task in his first public statement following his confirmation. On December 23, Arens said that the U.S. decision to hold a dialogue with the PLO, "the leading terrorist organization in the past 25 years," would only generate more extremism and hence more violence. The previous day, President Reagan had sent Shamir a message (not made public until December 28) explaining the U.S. move and stressing that "nothing in this decision should be construed as weakening the United States' commitment to Israel's security." Reagan also took the opportunity to encapsulate his perception of U.S.-Israeli relations under his administration:

Building on our friendship and strengthening the close ties that bind us have been among my proudest achievements as president. . . . I am confident that through our joint efforts nothing can destroy the mutual trust, confidence and commitment we have built, and that the next U.S. administration will move quickly to work with your government toward our mutual goals.

Traditionally, many of those "mutual goals" centered on security and strategy, and despite the fundamental differences over policy in the territories, relations at the military-defense level remained strong in 1988. The Iran-contra affair was finally wiped off the agenda between the two countries when an agreement was signed (announced March 28) formalizing Jerusalem's cooperation with the U.S. independent counsel investigating the matter. The terms of the agreement were not divulged, but the hope was expressed that it would assure continued cooperation "to the mutual satisfaction of both sides."

Mutual satisfaction, particularly on the Israeli side, was also expressed at the signing, on April 21, Israel's 40th Independence Day, of a Memorandum of Agree-
ment (MOA) between the two countries at ceremonies held in Jerusalem and Washington. The document broke little if any new ground. Its primary purpose was to reaffirm "the close relationship" between the two countries "based upon common goals, interests and values," and Israel's designation "as a major non-NATO ally of the United States." A White House statement explained that the agreement, valid for five years with an option for further five-year renewals, "formalizes and perpetuates the bilateral U.S. and Israeli consultative groups that meet periodically to discuss joint military-security assistance and economic development questions." However, a phone conversation between Reagan and Shamir to mark the signing was canceled for "technical" reasons, and observers noted that Washington had hardly gone out of its way to publicize the event. Shamir however, cited the new MOA—which was signed despite the virtual demise of Shultz's peace initiative and despite the volatile situation in the territories following the assassination five days earlier of the PLO's Abu Jihad—as proof of the enduring quality of "this unique partnership in common values and interests and in the desire for peace."

The MOA stated explicitly that the Joint Israel-U.S. Political-Military Group was responsible, among other tasks, for planning "joint exercises" between the armed forces of the two countries. One such exercise was held in July with the participation of the Israel Navy and vessels from the U.S. Sixth Fleet, including the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower. At a ceremony marking the conclusion of the maneuvers, Sixth Fleet commander Rear Admiral Kendall Moranville said he had "been given assurances" that U.S. marines would conduct land maneuvers in Israel "in the near future."

In November U.S. secretary of defense Frank Carlucci paid a three-day visit to Israel for talks on bilateral military and strategic cooperation and regional developments. Carlucci said that the continuing U.S. military and other support for Israel was a "clear sign to Israel's adversaries that there is no military option." Carlucci was returning a visit to the United States by Defense Minister Rabin in June during which the two countries signed an agreement for the joint development (with Washington to underwrite 80 percent of the $130-million price tag) of the Arrow anti-ballistic missile, an Israeli concept deriving from the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") project in which Israel had agreed to take part. (When Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Michael Armacost visited Israel in June, he said Washington was concerned about the burgeoning Middle East missile race, particularly China's sale of medium-range missiles to Saudi Arabia. Earlier in the year, the director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, Yosef Ben-Aharon, had made a veiled threat that Israel would attack the missiles in Saudi Arabia, leading President Reagan, Egyptian president Mubarak, and others to ask Israel to show restraint. A statement from Prime Minister Shamir said that Israel did not plan to strike at the missiles but was concerned about their deployment on Saudi soil.) Carlucci, at all events, said he had been impressed by the "high level of proficiency and morale" he found in the IDF and added that the level of cooperation between the two defense establishments "could not be better."
This was hardly the case in Israel's relations with much of Western Europe in 1988. Governments of countries traditionally friendly to Israel expressed their intense disapproval of the IDF's handling of the uprising in the territories, often in deeds as well as words, and nightly TV images of the intifada caused Israel's popularity to plummet in public-opinion polls.

In January British minister of state for foreign affairs David Mellors, visiting the Gaza Strip, castigated an IDF officer for his behavior and told the BBC that conditions in Gaza were "an affront to civilized values." The following month, the leader of the British Labor party, Neil Kinnock, accused the IDF of using dumdum bullets (designed to explode internally) against Palestinians in the territories, a charge that was "categorically" denied by both the IDF and Israeli government officials. In July Israeli spokesmen pointed to Britain's huge arms deal with Saudi Arabia, while maintaining an arms boycott vis-à-vis Israel, as proof that the British stand on the Middle East was unbalanced. A better atmosphere prevailed when Foreign Minister Peres met with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (September 14), with the two agreeing that PLO chairman Arafat had still not demonstrated that he was serious about moving toward peace. A weeklong visit by British tourism minister John Lee (he arrived October 28) was welcomed by Israel, particularly after the Arab League had issued a statement warning that the visit would be considered a "provocation" against the Arab world and could produce "negative repercussions for Arab-British interests."

Following a 24-hour visit (January 23–24), West German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher told a press conference in Jerusalem that the European Community (EC)—which he currently chaired—considered it "urgent" to find a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and this could be done by convening an international conference. In the course of his visit Genscher met with seven prominent Palestinians from the territories, who handed him a letter urging "international protection" for the Palestinians against Israeli policy in the territories.

A visit to France by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (September 23–24) took place not long after French foreign minister Roland Dumas had met with PLO chief Yasir Arafat during the latter's visit to Strasbourg to address the European Parliament. Dumas briefed Peres, who also met with President François Mitterrand, on the meeting. President Chaim Herzog, making the first state visit by an Israeli head of state to France (October 17–21), devoted much of his time to explaining the situation in the territories. He also visited the Normandy coast, where he had landed as a soldier in the British expeditionary force on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

Netherlands prime minister Ruud Lubbers expressed his country's "concern" at Israeli actions and policies in the territories during a three-day visit in July, the first ever by a Dutch premier. Lubbers, who was accompanied by Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek, expressed Holland's "commitment to the Jewish people and the future of Israel," but also called for an international peace conference and urged
Israel to recognize Palestinian rights. Another major talking point between the two sides concerned the Israeli decision to seek direct flights from the USSR to Israel for new immigrants. The Dutch, who represented Israeli interests in Moscow and hence issued Israeli visas to Jews wishing to leave the Soviet Union, opposed the Israeli decision because it abridged freedom of choice. The two countries agreed to form a committee to study the matter. The Dutch foreign minister met with a group of leading PLO supporters from the territories and toured the Kalandia refugee camp near Jerusalem.

A blunt message was received from Foreign Minister Sten Andersson of Sweden during a two-day visit (March 7–9). Following a tour of Bethlehem and the adjacent Deheishe refugee camp, he told reporters that he did not see how Israel could continue to exist without solving the Palestinian problem. Andersson also met with nine leading Palestinians from the territories and was at loggerheads with his Israeli interlocutors on the question of PLO participation in an international conference.

On his return home following a visit to Italy (February 15–17), Prime Minister Shamir said that Israel's image in the Italian media is "very poor," but that "when one digs deeper, one reaches the conclusion that the media do not reflect the true state of public opinion." Ha'aretz's Rome correspondent described Shamir's talks with Italian leaders, dominated by the issue of the occupied territories, as "a polite dialogue of the deaf."

Some scheduled visits did not take place at all due to the intifada, particularly in the early part of the year when the mass violence, and consequently the mass-media coverage, were at their height. Belgium canceled planned visits to Israel by its defense minister and a purchasing mission. A Swiss Army mission did likewise. Two Dutch high schools refused to host a youth delegation organized by the Israeli Foreign Ministry. In January the Foreign Ministry condemned as "totally unjustified and extremely offensive" a statement attributed to Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou of Greece in which he spoke of Israel's "fascist occupation." Even the Norwegian ambassador to Israel, Torleiv Anda, had to be berated—by Deputy Foreign Minister Yosef Beilin—after he drew a comparison between German actions in Norway in World War II and IDF measures in the territories. Anda, who had been incarcerated in Buchenwald, told Beilin he regretted making the remark, which, he said, had been distorted and misunderstood.

Concrete economic damage was inflicted on some branches of Israeli agriculture, notably flower growing, by the European Parliament's repeated postponement of ratification of trade protocols with Israel. As a result of the inaction, Israeli exporters were forced to continue paying high customs levies, which severely reduced their income and undercut their competitive ability. Although technical reasons were cited, an angry Prime Minister Shamir told the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee in January, after the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on Israel to desist from its "reprisals" against the Palestinians in the territories, that the real reason for the delay was political and was tantamount to "blackmail."
One demand of the Europeans which Israel had thus far refused to accept was to allow residents of the territories to export agricultural produce independently of Israel. It was not until October 12, after Palestinian farmers in the territories were permitted to export citrus fruit under their own label and independently of the Israeli marketing mechanism, that the European Parliament ratified the protocols. In December the first such shipment—"Gaza Top" grapefruits—was sent to Europe where it would compete with Israeli produce.

EASTERN EUROPE

Israel's relations with Eastern Europe continued to develop rapidly, despite the moral and material support the countries of that region had traditionally proffered to the Arabs in general and the PLO in particular. The major event in the continuing Israeli-Soviet rapprochement was the arrival in Moscow of an Israeli consular delegation on July 28. The six-member team was headed by a career diplomat, Russian-born Meron Gordon, plucked from his current posting in Rome, and included Yaakov Kedmi, formerly Yasha Kazakov, a former refusenik and one of the initiators of the emigration movement among Soviet Jewry in the 1970s. Like their Soviet counterparts who had been in Israel since July 1987 (AJYB 1989, p. 406), the Israeli diplomats were officially in the USSR (where they were hosted by the Netherlands embassy) solely for the technical purpose of inspecting the former Israeli embassy building in Moscow. Israel had been paying rent on the building, reportedly $100,000 a year, since it was shut down 21 years earlier after relations were severed by the Russians. At the end of October the Soviets approved the posting of a ranking Israeli diplomat, Arie Levin, the head of the Foreign Ministry's research section, to head the consular mission, a move seen as an implicit upgrading of its diplomatic status.

Israel's stock in the Soviet Union got a further boost as a result of two events late in the year. On December 2, a Soviet airplane, hijacked during an internal Russian flight, landed at Ben-Gurion Airport. Israel's smooth handling of the crisis, including the detention and deportation to the USSR of the hijackers (none of them Jewish) the next day, won high praise from Moscow and produced a diplomatic breakthrough in the form of a meeting between Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Arie Levin. The Tass news agency quoted Shevardnadze as thanking Israel for its "goodwill" and lauded the "norms of civilized intergovernmental relations" displayed during the incident. Several days later Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev personally thanked Israel's UN envoy, Yochanan Bein, for Jerusalem's help, during a reception at the UN in New York. The Soviet consular mission in Israel was also involved in dealing with the crisis.

On December 11, an Israel Air Force Boeing 707 landed in Yerevan, the capital of the Armenian Republic, carrying a rescue team and medical personnel to help in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake. The mission was led by Brig. Gen.
Aharon Vardi, head of the IDF's Civil Defense Corps. A second team, comprising 46 military and civilian medical personnel, arrived five days later and set up a field hospital at Kirovakan, where they treated some 2,400 persons in two weeks. The Israeli efforts drew praise in Izvestia and from Soviet officials.

On September 30, Israel and Poland moved a step closer to diplomatic relations when each country's "interests section" was elevated to independent status. The upgrading was announced in New York in a meeting between Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his Polish counterpart, Tadeusz Olechowski. Earlier in the year, the head of the Israeli mission in Warsaw, Mordechai Palzur, had had occasion to protest a statement by Polish government spokesman Jerzy Urban that Israel's handling of the uprising in the occupied territories was an insult to the memory of the Warsaw Ghetto defenders. The Polish statement came just days after 2,000 Jewish youths from Israel and the Diaspora, joined by Education Minister Yitzhak Navon, Justice Minister Avraham Sharir, Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Dinitz, six MKs, and dozens of other Israeli officials participated in a "March of the Living" at Auschwitz-Birkenau to mark the start of weeklong ceremonies and events commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto uprising 45 years earlier. It was the first visit to Poland by elected Israeli representatives in 20 years; in another first, Israel Radio broadcast the event live.

Israel's relations with Hungary moved forward. On March 14, the two countries established interests offices in Budapest and Tel Aviv, and on May 8, Foreign Minister Peres became the most senior Israeli official to visit an Eastern bloc country (other than Romania) since 1967, when he arrived in Budapest for talks with Prime Minister Karoly Grosz and Foreign Minister Peter Varkonyi. However, neither this visit nor one by Prime Minister Shamir in mid-September produced a further breakthrough in relations in 1988. For their part, the Hungarians dispatched Church Affairs Minister Imre Miklos to Israel in September, and the following month Tourism Minister Avraham Sharir and Hungarian Trade Minister Miklos Andriko signed a tourism agreement during the latter's visit to Israel. About 30,000 Israelis visited Hungary in 1988.

Other notable events in 1988 included the visit to Belgrade in August by Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Dinitz for a meeting with Foreign Minister Budimir Loncar, the first visit by a senior Israeli political figure to Yugoslavia in 20 years; and the first meeting of its kind between Foreign Minister Peres and his Czech counterpart, Bohuslav Chnoupek, held in September at UN headquarters in New York. Relations with Bucharest continued to flourish: in May, Romanian deputy premier Nikolai Konstantin visited Israel and in a meeting with Prime Minister Shamir the two countries agreed to arrange mutual visits by cabinet ministers. Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon visited Romania in July, and in November he and his Romanian counterpart, Johan Ongor, signed various trade protocols during the latter's visit to Israel. (Sharon also visited Poland and Bulgaria in 1988, but on an unofficial basis.)
On December 23, Kenya became the fifth African state to renew diplomatic relations with Israel in recent years. The Kenyan Foreign Ministry explained that the move followed the PLO's acceptance of "the two crucial United Nations resolutions leading to Middle East peace through direct negotiations." Extensive economic ties between Kenya and Israel had been maintained since Nairobi broke relations in 1973. Another African country, Zaire, went public—at a press conference on June 29 in Jerusalem, called by Foreign Ministry director-general Avraham Tamir and Zaire's ambassador to Israel, Lamponda Wa Botende—with a list of its disappointed expectations from its renewal of relations with Israel. In July Israel showed that it had gotten the message when Tamir signed a protocol in Zaire assuring additional Israeli military aid, an $8 million loan, and agricultural help.

In Asia the picture was mixed. In March Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India personally prohibited his country's Davis Cup tennis team from playing in Israel as a protest against Israeli "atrociess" in the territories. However, in July India agreed to upgrade the level of the head of Israel's legation in the country from deputy consul to consul.

In February Foreign and Trade Minister Bill Hayden of Australia signed a trade agreement during a three-day visit to Israel and urged Israel to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, which he called "a demographic time-bomb."

Foreign Minister Sousuke Uno of Japan, on a Middle East tour in June, became the highest-ranking official from his country ever to visit Israel. His 24-hour stay (June 26–27) included meetings with the president, the prime minister, and the vice-premier as well as visits to East Jerusalem and refugee camps. Foreign Ministry director-general Tamir said Israel could not accept Japan's linkage of investments and joint projects with intensified peace efforts. In a message to Shamir (July 4), Foreign Minister Uno described his visit as "moving" and "most beneficial for further political dialogues between our two countries."

Ties with China inched forward. In March, the leader of the left-wing Mapam party, Elazar Granot, paid an official visit to China, noting that Mapam was the first Zionist party ever invited to send a representative to that country. In September Foreign Minister Peres met at the UN in New York with his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichan, and was told that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries depended on progress toward peace in the Middle East. A Chinese trade mission visited Israel in October, followed in November by the arrival of a permanent tourism representative.

Relations with Latin America continued strong, unaffected by the intifada. Visitors to Israel in 1988 included the commander of the Argentinian army, Gen. Jose Dantecaridi, in January; Colombian defense minister Gen. Rafael Samudio Molina, in October, who signed a deal worth $200 million for 13 Israeli-made Kfir jet fighters; and Bolivian foreign minister Guillermo Bedregal Gutierrez, in December.

Israel's skeptical view of the UN was reinforced when the world body's under
secretary-general, Marrack Goulding, said in January, following a visit to the occupied territories in order to prepare a report for the Security Council, that the violence there was the result of Israeli policies which had engendered "despair and hopelessness." Goulding met with Foreign Minister Peres, but Prime Minister Shamir rejected a request for a meeting on the ground that Goulding was interfering in Israel's internal affairs. The report itself, issued by UN secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuéllar in January, accused the IDF of using "disproportionate force" to put down disturbances in the territories and called on Israel "to change its position as to the applicability" of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the areas.

EGYPT

Developments in two spheres—the Palestinian uprising and the Taba arbitration talks—dominated relations between Israel and Egypt in 1988. On May 15, in Geneva, a five-member panel of international arbitrators, including one representative each from Egypt and Israel, began deliberating on the Taba issue after last-ditch compromise efforts by U.S. State Department legal adviser Abraham Sofaer had failed. (Taba, a tiny and nonstrategic strip of coastline just south of Eilat, on which stood an Israeli luxury hotel and a holiday village, was the last unresolved territorial element in the implementation of the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.) Talks between Israel and Egypt aimed at working out a solution both sides could live with continued, largely at the behest of the United States, which feared that the arbitrators' decision—which was binding—might spark a crisis in relations between the two countries. However, the politics of national unity proved a major stumbling block in the compromise efforts, the Likud and Alignment advocating diametrically opposed approaches to the problem. The director-general of the Foreign Ministry wanted to accept the U.S. proposal, which took as its starting point Egyptian sovereignty over Taba, and extract maximum concessions in the field; while the director-general of the Prime Minister's Office refused to concede Egyptian sovereignty and espoused what was, at bottom, an all-or-nothing approach.

On September 29—one month before the Knesset elections—the arbitration panel, as expected, basically gave all to Egypt and nothing to Israel. After an initial flurry of mutual recriminations over "who had lost Taba," Labor and Likud tacitly agreed not to make the matter a campaign issue. Two months to the day after the arbitration decision, Israeli and Egyptian representatives, meeting in Rome at the headquarters of the Sinai Multinational Force, reached agreement on the technical implementation of the decision. On December 15, as stipulated in the accord, Israeli and Egyptian military teams began "construction of the boundary pillars of the recognized international boundary" as determined by the arbitrators.

As it had been during the Lebanon War, official Egyptian reaction to Israel's handling of the uprising in the territories was relatively muted. Sporadic protests were made by President Hosni Mubarak and other senior officials, and the Egyptian
embassy in Tel Aviv did not hold its traditional reception on Egypt's national day (although the Israeli chargé d'affaires in Cairo was invited to the official reception there). But when Egypt recognized the "State of Palestine" declared by the Palestine National Council in mid-November, Foreign Minister Peres himself summoned Egyptian ambassador to Israel Muhammad Bassiouny to his office and, according to a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, informed him "that Egypt's recognition of the Palestinian state as declared in Algiers is not consistent with the principle of a negotiated settlement of the conflict to which both Egypt and Israel are committed." Peres expressed his "regret" at Cairo's move and asked Bassiouny to convey Israel's "concern at this development" to the Egyptian government.

In the meantime, diplomatic relations proceeded at lower levels: on September 19, the new Israeli ambassador to Egypt, Prof. Shimon Shamir, an orientalist from Tel Aviv University, presented his credentials to President Mubarak. He was then invited for a private 90-minute meeting with the Egyptian leader, during which the peace process and bilateral relations were discussed.

The Economy

The economy slumped badly in 1988, particularly in the second half of the year, when recessionary indicators, including rising unemployment, became apparent. This was due in part to the intifada, which had both direct and indirect effects, and in part to the standstill approach adopted by the Treasury, where measures taken (or not taken) by Finance Minister Moshe Nissim were influenced by the fact that 1988 was an election year.

According to most estimates, the uprising in the territories caused a direct loss of at least 1.5 percent of the GNP, or about $600 million, as compared with economic performance in 1987. Of this, approximately a quarter was due to civilian workdays lost because of call-ups for reserve duty and operational military expenditures. Defense expenditures as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased for the first time since 1982 (the Lebanon War) and stood at 10.3 percent, which was 0.5 percent more than the state budget had allowed for. Following protracted discussions, the Treasury in September agreed to compensate the IDF to the tune of NIS 180 million for unbudgeted costs incurred in the intifada, even though the Defense Ministry estimated the actual cost to be in excess of NIS 400 million and had requested NIS 263 million.

Beyond this, the pervasive uncertainty caused by the government's vacillations in dealing with the peace process and with the intifada eroded confidence and created a climate that was not conducive to economic growth. The figures themselves could not tell the whole story since they did not take into account the high growth expectations that had been held for 1988 in various sectors, primarily because of events and programs which had been planned to coincide with Israel's 40th-anniversary celebrations. Hardest hit from this point of view was the tourism industry, which suffered a direct decrease of 15 percent in arrivals as compared with
1987 (1,169,000 in 1988 vs. 1,379,000 the previous year). In fact, the blow was even worse because the industry had invested in infrastructure and development in anticipation of a boom year, and because the decline was at its most intense in the peak summer months due to booking cancellations caused by media reports of the uprising's mass-demonstrations stage in the first quarter of the year.

Israeli "exports" to the occupied territories decreased by approximately 31 percent in real terms as compared with 1987. This was due to the drastic self-imposed economic slowdown in the territories and the boycotting of Israeli goods. The export of agricultural produce from Israel to the territories fell by some 60 percent, and factories in Israel which had manufactured products in high demand in the territories suffered. Overall, industrial production fell by more than 3 percent in 1988, following an increase of 5 percent in 1987 and 3.5 percent in 1986. One result was that the number of persons employed in industry declined by 3.5 percent, following a rise of 2 percent in 1987.

Particularly hard hit were the textile industry—a falloff of 15 percent in production—due in part to relatively high worker absenteeism; agriculture (a 7-percent production decline, caused in part by bad weather which nearly wiped out the avocado crop, after a growth of 8 percent in 1987); and construction (which managed to register a barely perceptible growth of about 1 percent, following a rise of 9 percent in 1987). All three sectors relied heavily on cheap labor from the territories. In January, Education Minister Yitzhak Navon ordered an emergency mobilization of high-school students "in order to help save the citrus crop," which was rotting due to the absence of workers from the territories. Labor and Social Affairs Minister Moshe Katzav authorized the import of about 550 workers from southern Lebanon for the harvest (citrus production was down 22 percent in 1988), alluding to the effect of the occupation on the original Zionist ethos when he declared that Jews must be encouraged to do manual labor. Indeed, some experts thought that, in the long term, intifada-related economic developments might prove salutary by forcing Israeli manufacturers to seek new markets for their products, both domestic and foreign, and by compelling labor-intensive industries such as construction to modernize and become more efficient, thus reducing housing costs and perhaps attracting more Israelis to an industry in which workers from the territories comprised about half the labor force.

Many Israelis found themselves forced out of the labor market altogether in 1988. When Finance Minister Nissim presented a budget of NIS 52.1 billion for fiscal year 1988-1989 on January 26 (with the uprising already six weeks old) in the Knesset, he made a virtue of restraint, arguing that since in 1987 his noninterventionist tactics had stimulated the business sector, generated higher exports, brought about increased investments, lowered inflation, and decreased unemployment, 1988 would see more of the same. The budget was passed on March 23, but virtually every Treasury forecast for 1988 turned out to be over-optimistic.

The GDP grew by only 1.5 percent, the lowest gain since 1982, as compared with increases of 5 percent in 1987 and 3-4 percent each in 1986 and 1985. Growth in
the business sector was below 1 percent and was at a total standstill in the second half of the year. Private consumption, reflecting the living standard, rose by a modest 1.5 percent per capita, as compared with 7 percent in 1987 and 12 percent in 1986. Public consumption remained stable as compared with 1987, at about 3 percent (excluding defense imports). The overall unemployment rate stood at 6.4 percent at year's end, slightly higher than in 1987 (6.1 percent); however, in the second half of the year unemployment climbed to 7 percent (despite the shortfall in workers from the territories).

In June Histadrut's giant Koor concern, whose diverse firms employed one of every three Israeli industrial workers and accounted for 12 percent of the country's industrial product, announced losses of NIS 389 million for 1987, the worst single performance in Israeli industrial history. The conglomerate's managing director, Yeshayahu Gavish, had already resigned in March and been replaced by Benny Gaon, the successful director of another Histadrut enterprise, the Co-Op retail chain. Gaon, who likened Koor to "a plane without a pilot cruising aimlessly by night without a compass," launched a recovery program involving mass dismissals, plant closings, and the selling of assets.

One of the first problems Gaon faced was a liquidation threat by some of Koor's foreign creditors, including the U.S.-based Bankers Trust and Manufacturers Hanover Trust. On December 20, the Tel Aviv district court removed the danger of liquidation for at least a month, during which the sides were to endeavor to work out an arrangement acceptable to all parties involved. Explaining his decision, Judge Eliahu Winograd said that Koor's collapse would have a devastating ripple effect throughout the entire Israeli economy. In the meantime, the first to feel the effects of the concern's streamlining efforts were the workers, 4,760 of whom lost their jobs in the second half of the year as Koor-owned firms were scaled down, shut down, sold, or placed in receivership. Another labor-movement conglomerate, Milouot, comprising 13 food-processing plants in the country's north and owned by the kibbutz movement, was revealed to have debts of NIS 400 million.

Given this picture, it was perhaps not surprising that agricultural and industrial exports, excluding diamonds, were down by about 4 percent, due primarily to the steep decline in exports to the territories. Diamond exports rose by 2 percent, well below the increases of the previous three years. Civilian imports registered no change as compared with 1987. Nevertheless, imports of automobiles were up 21 percent as compared with 1987 and approached the peak year of 1983. All told, net civilian imports were higher by $2.8 billion than net exports, a 13-percent improvement as compared with 1987; the overall trade deficit stood at $5.3 billion, an 8-percent fall as compared with 1987, due to a drop in defense imports. Israel's total foreign debt at the end of 1988 was $24.4 billion, down by $1 billion from 1987. Export profitability showed a steady decline throughout the year, due in large part to the fixed exchange rate.

As the date of the general election approached, expectations of a devaluation of the shekel intensified, triggering mass purchasing of dollars and a call from Bank
of Israel governor Michael Bruno for a devaluation. This trend was halted in the immediate aftermath of the election when Finance Minister Nissim—as he still was during the coalition negotiations—made it clear that he was against a devaluation. However, as those who had purchased dollars did not reconvert them to shekels, the banks faced an immediate liquidity crisis, and the interest rate for borrowers of "scarce" shekels soared to more than 30 percent. Shimon Peres, immediately upon his confirmation as finance minister, launched feverish meetings with representatives of the Histadrut and the Manufacturers Association in an effort to work out a package deal to spur economic growth. However, as it was widely believed that this would include a devaluation, another run on the dollar began which eventually totaled some $2.5 billion, most of it purchased by the business sector in the hope of an easy profit. At midday on December 12, the shekel was devalued by 5 percent against the dollar, but this failed to halt the dollar-buying spree as a second devaluation was expected. On December 29 (a Thursday), trading in foreign currency was halted for the remainder of the year. At midnight on December 31, the prices of basic commodities were hiked when the subsidies on them were slashed by 12–26 percent, the third such cut in 1988 (in May subsidies were reduced by 15–32 percent—for the first time since January 1987—and in October, less than a month before the elections, by 8–14 percent). Peres was to announce a new economic plan early in 1990.

The consumer price index for 1988 was 16.1 percent, down a full 3.6 percent from 1987, and including four months in which inflation was below 1 percent. The basket of goods that the Central Bureau of Statistics used to determine the CPI was revised in 1988—based on a survey of public consumption conducted in 1987—to make it conform with current Israeli expenditures. Thus the proportion allotted to most commodities or services was changed—the housing element decreased from 20 percent to 16.5 percent, clothing and shoes now accounted for 7.25 percent of the CPI basket, and so forth—and some new items were added, such as computers and VCRs. However, such calculations were largely irrelevant for the 634,000 Israelis who, the National Insurance Institute said, were below the poverty line, including nearly one of every three Israeli children, Jewish or Arab.

**Extremism and Violence**

In the view of some experts, the violence and extremism that had become increasingly pervasive in Israeli society were linked in some degree to Israel’s suppression of the growing unrest in the occupied territories during the 1980s and particularly since the Lebanon War. One manifestation of these trends was the public’s willingness to tolerate the dissemination of ideas that once were almost universally rejected as anathema. Thus, a public-opinion poll conducted in June by the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research and the Communications Institute of the Hebrew University found that 49 percent of Jewish Israeli adults thought that "causing the Arabs from the territories to leave" would "allow the democratic and Jewish nature
of Israeli society to be maintained." The "transfer option" was chosen by two-thirds of persons who said they would vote Likud and by one-third of persons who said they would vote Labor. Concluded Prof. Elihu Katz, the poll's scientific director, "The subject of transfer is no longer taboo; it has gained legitimacy, become a focus of public discussion and swept through the [political] right."

The appearance on the political stage of the Moledet (Homeland) party, headed by a retired major general, Rehavam Ze'evi, which openly espoused the "voluntary transfer" of the Arabs in the territories, helped to legitimize the idea as a topic of debate. Unlike Meir Kahane, Ze'evi was flesh of the flesh of the Israeli establishment—nowhere was this better seen than in President Herzog's meeting with Ze'evi at the President's Residence as part of the postelection process, in striking contrast to Herzog's refusal to receive Kahane under the same circumstances four years earlier. Significantly, his arguments drew not on an interpretation of the Torah and the forefathers of the Jewish people but, ostensibly, on the roots of Zionism and the founding fathers of the Jewish state.

In an article in Ha'aretz (August 17), Ze'evi sought to refute contentions that the transfer idea was immoral. After quoting David Ben-Gurion and mentioning past Labor luminaries such as Moshe Sharett and Berl Katznelson, Ze'evi wrote: "If [the transfer idea] is not moral, then the whole of Zionism and its realization in the course of more than a hundred years is not moral. The settlement enterprise in Eretz-Yisrael and our War of Independence are studded with operations in which Arabs were transferred from their villages." Yet underlying the cool rationalism in which Ze'evi couched his arguments was another message, indistinguishable from Kahane's appeal to dark passions. A week after the appearance of his article in Ha'aretz, Ze'evi told a meeting of about 300 supporters in Tel Aviv: "The Palestinians in Judea-Samaria and Gaza are a festering sore, and in order to finish it—this cancer—it must not be allowed to develop."

On the night of August 8, in the town of Ohr Yehuda, near Tel Aviv, three Arab workers from Gaza were burned to death when the shack they were sleeping in was torched after the door had been locked from the outside. (Workers from the territories were not allowed to remain in Israel overnight, but thousands slept in makeshift shelters, in abominable conditions, the authorities generally turning a blind eye to the phenomenon.) The incident touched off riots in Gaza and several local youths were arrested. Toward the end of August, three other Ohr Yehuda residents, aged 20, 21, and 31, were arrested on suspicion of committing arson and conspiracy to commit murder after firebombs were thrown at a Jewish home in the town. The three had evidently planned a replay of the August 8 attack but had backed off at the last minute and had tried to create a "provocation" for which Arabs would be blamed. The mayor of Ohr Yehuda, Yitzhak Bukozba, paid a condolence visit to the family of one of the three workers who were burned to death, in Gaza. There were several incidents in which Arabs were beaten by Jews in Tel Aviv during August.

According to police statistics for 1988, the incidence of serious crime rose by 28.8
percent, and crimes involving violence were up by 5.7 percent. Of the offenders arrested inside the Green Line, 66 percent were Jews, 27 percent were Israeli Arabs (well above their proportion in the population), and 6.5 percent were Palestinians from the territories. The preoccupation of the police with *intifada*-related matters, primarily in Jerusalem and in Galilee, meant that fewer efforts could be devoted to other urgent matters, such as the war on drugs or efforts to reduce road accidents.

Observers on the Left professed to see an indirect endorsement of extremism in President Herzog's continued commuting of prison terms meted out to the members of the Jewish terrorist underground. On April 1, Yitzhak Ganiram and Ira Rapaport were released from prison after Herzog reduced their sentences by five-and-a-half and four-and-a-half months, respectively, along with a one-third reduction for good behavior. In this as in all the previous instances, the president explained his action by noting that the two had expressed "sincere contrition." Barak Nir, one of the five underground members who remained in prison (three of them serving life sentences for murder, which Herzog had reduced to 24 years), finished serving his four-year term, after getting a third off, on April 26. A private member's bill to further reduce the sentences of the underground members in prison by legislative fiat was narrowly defeated (58-53) in the Knesset on June 14; a previous attempt, about half a year earlier, had gained the support of only 40 religious and right-wing MKs.

Prime Minister Shamir, who voted in favor of both bills, on August 1 received in his office a delegation of the "Temple Mount Faithful," a small but highly vocal ultranationalist group that sought to restore "Jewish sovereignty" on the Temple Mount. According to a press release issued by the prime minister's media adviser, Shamir told the delegation that "he respects the struggle and persistence of the Temple Mount Faithful" and called for East Jerusalem to be "massively settled with Jews." Shamir added: "I am sure that many of your demands will be fulfilled in the coming years."

*Religious Issues*

The usually dormant issue of the exemption from military service of yeshivah students made headlines in 1988, perhaps due to the increased call-ups of reservists to deal with the *intifada*. On June 12, the High Court of Justice ruled that the Defense Ministry was empowered to defer the military service of yeshivah students, an arrangement dating back to 1948. Critics charged that over time the original intention—"deferral"—had in fact become "evasion." In 1988 the situation was that no more than 2 percent of those who received such deferrals actually did military service at a later stage. A division-sized body of yeshivah students, totaling some 20,000, was thus in practice exempted from serving in the IDF; defense establishment sources estimated that within five years this number would grow to 30,000, or 5.5 percent of Israel's military strength. In July the proposals of a subcommittee of the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee, headed by MK Rabbi
Menahem Hacohen (Labor), for slashing the number of yeshivah students eligible for draft exemptions, were endorsed by the committee's plenum. However, the prospects for passage of the legislation required to implement this plan were poor, particularly after the gains made by the ultra-Orthodox parties in the Knesset elections. In the aftermath of those elections, on November 29, with the coalition talks—and the demands of the religious bloc—at their height, thousands of people attended a rally organized by 66 senior reserve officers against draft exemptions. This was followed some days later by a counterdemonstration of hundreds of ultra-Orthodox Jews who had done military service.

Other issues involving the religious-secular rift also cropped up in 1988. In May the High Court of Justice ruled that a woman appointed to serve on a local Religious Council could in fact serve. The case was that of Leah Shakdiel, an Orthodox woman from the Negev development town of Yeroham, whose installation on the council had been held up solely because of her sex. On October 25, Shakdiel became the first woman in Israel ever to take part in the meeting of a Religious Council as a full member. The country's (Orthodox) rabbinical establishment, in the form of the Supreme Rabbinical Council, railed against the decision, as it did against another High Court ruling under which the new Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Tel Aviv was elected by a body including women members. (For additional details on both cases, see AJYB 1989, pp. 418-419.)

The indirect clash between the two court systems, the religious and the secular, was also in evidence on the vexed issue of personal status, on which neither the executive nor the legislative branch was able or willing to take a definitive stance. On January 31, the High Court of Justice decided by a vote of 4-1 to accept the announcement of the attorney general that, with the Shoshana Miller case as a precedent, he had no objections to the Interior Ministry's registering as Jews three recent immigrants converted abroad by Reform rabbis. (For additional background, see AJYB 1989, pp. 417-418.) The three, Gail Moscowsitch from the United States and Julia and Claudio Varella, a Brazilian couple, became the first Reform converts to be registered as Israelis under the Law of Return (Shoshana Miller left Israel before receiving her ID card, although legal efforts were under way to have her name entered in the Israeli population registry). In the meantime, the High Court began hearing a petition by two "messianic Jews," Jerry and Shirley Beresford, new immigrants from Zimbabwe, whom the Interior Ministry had also refused to register as Jews under the Law of Return.

Efforts by Minister Without Portfolio Yitzhak Peretz (Shas; he had resigned as interior minister over the Shoshana Miller case) to block the introduction of summer daylight-saving time were thwarted when the cabinet voted on February 14 for five months of an extra hour of daylight (April 10-September 4). Peretz had wanted summer time to end on August 13, since on the following day—the first day of the Hebrew month of Elul—Sephardi Jews began reciting the predawn daily prayers of penitence preceding the High Holy Days, several weeks before Ashkenazi Jews.

A long-standing issue was finally and formally resolved when the cabinet on May
8 approved the leasing of the land on Mount Scopus on which the Mormons’ Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies had been built. The approval, by a vote of 11-4 (three religious ministers and Ariel Sharon), followed the government’s acceptance of the contract with the Mormons under which they promised not to engage in missionary activity. The institution, a branch of Brigham Young University, had already begun operating. (See also AJYB 1989, p. 419.)

Israel and World Jewry

THE DEMJANJUK TRIAL

On January 25, the prosecution began a weeklong summation of its case against Ukrainian-born John Demjanjuk, a 68-year-old retired auto worker from Cleveland who had been extradited from the United States, accused of being the notorious “Ivan the Terrible” (“Ivan Grozny”) of the Treblinka death camp, where some 850,000 Jews had perished. Demjanjuk was charged on four counts under Israel’s Nazi and Nazi Collaborators Punishment Law of 1950, which carried a maximum penalty of death. The defendant admitted all the facts of the case but denied that he was Ivan. (For further background and a summary of the trial proceedings, see AJYB 1988, pp. 405-406, and AJYB 1989, pp. 419-422.) The prosecution devoted considerable efforts to establishing the authenticity of the ID card which placed Demjanjuk at the SS training camp at Trawnicki and later at Sobibor, although it did not mention Treblinka.

On April 18, the tribunal—Supreme Court Justice Dov Levin and two district court judges, Dalia Dorner and Zvi Tal—pronounced John Demjanjuk guilty as charged on all four counts: crimes against humanity, crimes against the Jewish people, war crimes, and crimes against persecuted persons. Taking turns, the judges took ten hours to read the 444-page verdict, at the end of which Justice Levin declared: “Therefore we have found that the accused is ‘Ivan the Terrible.’ ” The judgment was based “first and foremost on the testimonies and statements of the identifying witnesses,” the judges wrote, backed up by the Trawnicki ID card and “the false alibi and other lies of the accused and his incriminating behavior and statements.” The judgment was delivered in the defendant’s absence: Demjanjuk remained in his cell, saying he had severe back pains. However, his immediate family was present, every seat in the courtroom was taken, and the world media were present in force.

A week later, on April 25, Demjanjuk was brought to the court in a wheelchair to hear sentence pronounced. Judge Zvi Tal, himself a Holocaust survivor, read out the verdict. “Even a thousand deaths will not atone for [the defendant’s] deeds,” he asserted. “For such crimes there is no statute of limitations and no forgiveness.” Tal concluded:

True, the accused is not Eichmann, he did not initiate the Holocaust and he did not organize the slaughter of millions. But he served as chief executioner and with
his own hands killed tens of thousands and willingly tortured, humiliated, abused, debased and persecuted these wretched people. Therefore, for the crimes he committed and for which he was convicted, we sentence him to death.

The rest—in which Judge Tal announced that the accused had the right, and under Israeli law in the case of the death penalty, the obligation, to appeal the verdict—was drowned out as the packed courtroom erupted into a grotesque crescendo of applause, cries of "Death!" curses directed at defense lawyer Yoram Sheftel, the frenzied singing of "I Believe in the Coming of the Messiah" and "Am Yisrael Chai" ("Israel Lives"), and even dancing.

On June 30, the final day permitted under the law, Demjanjuk's lawyers filed a formal appeal in the Supreme Court against both the sentence and the verdict. Among the points adduced in the 100-page appeal were "press incitement" and a "lynch atmosphere," hostile statements by cabinet ministers and other public figures, the bench's interference in the defense's cross-questioning, and the failure of some survivors to identify the defendant. The bottom line, Sheftel and Paul Chumak argued, was that their client's guilt had not been proved "beyond a reasonable doubt."

However, on November 29, just days before the Supreme Court was scheduled to begin hearing the appeal, one of the defense lawyers, Dov Eitan, a 53-year-old former judge, leaped to his death from a Jerusalem office building. At Eitan's funeral two days later, a 70-year-old Jerusalem man, Israel Yehezkeli, whose family had perished at Treblinka, threw acid at Sheftel, injuring him in his left eye. As a result of these events, the Supreme Court postponed the hearing of Demjanjuk's appeal for six months, rescheduling it for May 4, 1989.

IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL

In what Immigrant Absorption Minister Yaakov Tzur termed a "historic" decision, the Jewish Agency Board of Governors decided in February to accept the principles of a report recommending that the Israeli government assume full responsibility for all matters pertaining to the absorption of immigrants in Israel. The report had been drawn up by a committee chaired by Dr. Israel Katz, director of the Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, and the underlying aim of the recommendations was to streamline the absorption process by eliminating duplication and reducing bureaucracy.

In the meantime, the Absorption Ministry was hardly overburdened: according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 13,034 olim, or new immigrants, arrived in Israel in 1988, approximately the same number as in the previous year. Some 42 percent of these arrivals—virtually all of them from Western democracies—were classified as "potential immigrants." One country from which immigration did increase was Argentina, by about 50 percent, to 1,546 persons, a development that was attributed to that country's economic crisis.

Arrivals from Africa numbered 1,334, of whom about a third were from the South
African Jewish community. In Israel, the last of the vexed personal-status problems that had plagued another African community, the Ethiopian Jews, since their arrival via "Operation Moses," was apparently resolved, though not without a further intervention by the judiciary. On October 23, the High Court of Justice accepted the petition of the Ethiopians' Beta Yisrael organization and ordered the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Absorption Ministry to establish within 90 days the Institute for the Heritage of Ethiopian Jewry. The court was critical of the foot dragging of the authorities on this matter, since agreement had been reached some three years earlier on the institute's creation as part of an arrangement by which Ethiopian Jews could forego ritual immersion (thus symbolically "converting" to Judaism at the demand of the Orthodox rabbinical establishment) before being allowed to marry. Following the court's ruling, the Chief Rabbinate appointed Rabbi David Chelouche, Sephardi chief rabbi of Netanya, as the marriage registrar for Ethiopian Jews. In early December Rabbi Chelouche conducted the ceremony at which Shlomo Akale married Makdes Mekonen Hiale, signifying the official integration of the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel.

Soviet Jewish olim accounted for 2,283 of the new immigrants in 1988, slightly more than in the previous year, but constituting only about 11.5 percent of all the Jews who left the USSR during the year. A number of leading Soviet Jewish activists arrived in 1988, and by year's end virtually all the longtime refuseniks and former Prisoners of Zion had left the USSR. Yosef Begun, a 16-year refusenik and former Prisoner of Zion, was accorded a gala welcome at Ben-Gurion Airport on January 19; in February he was given a check for $43,000 at a ceremony in the Prime Minister's Office, as a winner (along with Sen. Henry Jackson of the United States and France's Simone Veil) of the 1983 Defender of Jerusalem Prize awarded him at the time in absentia. The distinguished mathematician Prof. Alexander Yoffe, a 12-year refusenik who had been given a professorship by the Haifa Technion in 1978, arrived in February, as did Prof. Alexander Lerner, aged 74, a world-class cybernetics specialist, who was appointed professor emeritus by the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, and Alexei Magarik, a 29-year-old cellist and Hebrew teacher, believed to be the last Prisoner of Zion—he had been released in September 1987. March saw the arrival of Prof. Nahum Meiman, aged 77, a physicist whose knowledge of "state secrets" had been cause enough for the Soviets to prohibit his leaving; Lev Shapiro, aged 48, an electrical engineer and 11-year refusenik; and Ari and Ludmilla Volvosky, 14-year refuseniks whose 19-year-old daughter had preceded them to Israel by four months. In July Gershon Zvi Rosenstein, a 15-year refusenik and a biophysicist who was known as the Habad ultra-Orthodox movement's "chief of operations" in the USSR, came to Israel.

In May Israel's large (196,000-strong) Russian-Jewish community formed a body named the Zionist Forum of Soviet Jewry to promote the interests of Russian immigrants, newcomers, and veterans, and to present a united front vis-à-vis the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency. The chairman of the new group was Natan Sharansky, and the executive included such well-known figures as Ida Nudel,
Yosef Begun, Rabbi Eliahu Essas, and Yuli Edelstein. Later in the year, Sharansky and Nudel were involved in an exchange with the new Jewish Agency treasurer, former Herut MK Meir Shetreet. When the two former Prisoners of Zion had some stinging words for immigrant-absorption arrangements, Shetreet labeled them "slanderers" and perhaps revealed something of the gut feelings of many Israelis when he suggested that the money earmarked for Soviet immigrants could be better spent in preventing veteran Israelis from becoming emigrants.

A controversial issue was the decision by the cabinet on June 19 (by a vote of 16-2 and three abstentions) to compel Jews leaving the USSR with Israeli visas to proceed directly to Israel, with Bucharest named as the likely transit stop. The idea behind the move was to put a stop to what Absorption Minister Yaakov Tzur, speaking in the Knesset a few days before the vote, described as the "disgrace" of the "dropout" phenomenon—Soviet Jews who upon arrival in Vienna opted for destinations other than Israel. (In Bucharest this option would not exist.) However, the new arrangements remained largely on paper as they were opposed by the Netherlands, which represented Israeli interests in Moscow and issued the Israeli visas, and by the Soviet Union itself.

The Jewish Agency Assembly, meeting in Jerusalem in early July, unanimously endorsed a resolution "welcom[ing] the government of Israel's decision and initiative to secure direct flights from the Soviet Union to Israel for Soviet Jews who request an exit permit in order to reach Israel." However, this was largely neutralized when the assembly, taking note of "the Soviet policy on behalf of family reunifications," urged other governments to press Moscow to abide by its commitment to the Helsinki accords and "other international agreements regarding the right to leave." Such accords precluded the possibility of compelling immigrants to proceed to a specific destination, such as Israel. Many leading American Jewish organizations also objected to the Israeli cabinet decision.

AMERICAN JEWRY

Several issues produced strains in the relations between the American Jewish community and the Israeli political establishment in 1988. The aftermath of the Knesset elections, when ultra-Orthodox elements demanded passage of the "Who is a Jew?" amendment to the Law of Return as part of their price for joining either a Likud or Labor coalition, caused alarm and consternation among the overwhelming majority of American Jewry. (See the section on the election campaign, above, and "Jewish Communal Affairs," elsewhere in this volume.) Participants in the First International Jewish Feminist Conference, organized by the American Jewish Congress and held in Jerusalem in November, took the opportunity to express their opposition to the proposed change in the Law of Return by holding a demonstration in front of the Prime Minister's Office. Such legislation, the conference said, "would have particularly serious ramifications for Jewish women" because "the conversion
of women to Judaism by non-Orthodox rabbis would render them and their children ineligible for [Israeli] citizenship under the Law of Return."

In conjunction with its first world gathering, held in Jerusalem in July, the Conservative movement asked the High Court of Justice to order the Jerusalem Religious Council to overturn its recent decision to withhold a kashrut permit from the movement's local youth hostel. On the Tisha be'Av fast day the conference delegates demonstrated outside the headquarters of the Chief Rabbinate. The Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, which ordained the first four graduates of its Seminary of Judaic Studies in Jerusalem during the conference, urged the Knesset to abolish the Chief Rabbinate on the ground that it was a body alien to the Jewish tradition.

Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories also aggravated relations, especially in the early part of the year when Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin introduced a policy permitting soldiers to beat demonstrators with truncheons. The officially declared policy appalled large numbers of American Jews, and many American Jewish leaders felt compelled to break with tradition and speak out publicly against the Israeli military actions they saw nightly on the TV news. Among the leaders who spoke out were Bertram Gold, acting executive vice-president of the American Jewish Committee, who deplored the use of "brute force" which "evokes other times and places when it was used against us"; Hadassah president Ruth Popkin, who said she was having a "hard time believing Rabin would have said something like that. . . . That is not the Israeli way and it is not the Jewish way"; and four intellectuals—Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, the writer Irving Howe, the economist and former dean of Harvard University Henry Rosovsky, and the political scientist Michael Walzer—who sent a letter to the New York Times stating that they had "read with shame reports of house to house beatings of hundreds of people, leading to broken bones and hospitalization of the aged and children."

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, fired off a cable to President Chaim Herzog in which he said he was "deeply troubled and pained" but could not "remain silent" in the face of a policy that was "self-defeating and, therefore, counterproductive." In a letter of response to Rabbi Schindler (January 25), President Herzog asserted that there had been "no order to beat indiscriminately," and that "steps [had] been taken to ensure" that any possible "divergences and irregularities" would not recur. Herzog then linked the events in the territories to "the wave of Khomeinism which threatens our area" and drew a comparison between Israeli actions and measures taken by other countries, both in the Middle East and by Western democracies such as Britain (in Northern Ireland) and the United States (Kent State, Watts County, and Newark). "The issue is a far wider one than that of Israel's image," Herzog wrote, adding that "the picture as reflected by the all too simplistic presentation on the television screens abroad evades the issue."

More blunt was the Israeli consul-general in New York, Moshe Yegar, who said
that criticism of Israel by American Jews was an "unfriendly" act and belied protestations by such critics that they were "friends of Israel and strong Zionists." In an effort to tone down the debate, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and nine other groups, a total of 51 bodies, issued a somewhat equivocal statement, on the one hand supporting Israel's "legitimate efforts to oppose terrorism and violence" and accepting the concept that the uprising was part of the decades-long pattern in which "the Palestinian Arabs have been exploited and victimized by the Arab world"; but on the other hand noting that both President Herzog and Prime Minister Shamir had given "assurances . . . that the policy of restraint continues." The signatories said they had conveyed their "concern" to the Israeli government over "any departures in contradiction of this long-standing policy and practice."

In early March, when a delegation of the Presidents' Conference visited Israel, Prime Minister Shamir was on the eve of a crucial visit to Washington at the height of his efforts to stifle the peace initiative of Secretary of State Shultz. Shamir sought to convince the group that American Jewry must muzzle itself. American Jews, he told the 44-member mission, must not permit themselves "to be used in the campaign against us," irrespective of their opinions. Such criticism would play straight into the hands of Israel's enemies, Shamir warned, and the Arabs would turn it to their advantage by "driving a wedge between Israel and American Jewry" and ultimately between Israel and the United States. In an interview in the Jerusalem Post two days before his trip, Shamir reaffirmed the principle of nonintervention by the Diaspora in Israeli affairs: "Israel and its citizens alone must decide on fateful diplomatic and security matters."

At all events, on March 14, Shamir could well believe that his message had sunk in, and both he and the U.S. administration could believe that American Jewry was solidly behind him, as 3,000 young UJA fund-raisers gave him a resounding welcome at a banquet held in the Washington Hilton two days before his meeting with President Reagan. Shamir told the enthusiastic gathering that the violence in the territories was in fact an all-out "war," adding that only Israel's citizens could determine their destiny.

Other Domestic Matters

Population

Israel's population stood at approximately 4,472,000 at the end of 1988, comprising 3,656,000 Jews (81.8 percent), 633,000 Muslims (14.2 percent), 105,000 Christians (2.3 percent), and 78,000 Druze and members of other faiths (1.7 percent). The total population increased by 1.5 percent, as compared with 1.7 percent in 1987.

Data released by the Central Bureau of Statistics in conjunction with Israel's 40th anniversary showed that the largest ethnic group among Israeli Jews was the Moroc-
can community, totaling 488,000 persons, followed by persons of Polish (297,000), Romanian (277,000), and Iraqi (266,000) origin. Those who warned of the so-called "demographic threat," notably a Committee on the Demographic Problem that was formed in August with the participation of former Foreign Ministry director-general David Kimche and former cabinet secretary Arye Naor, with the aim of countering the public's "terrible ignorance" in this area, pointed to the fact that in Israel and the territories combined, Arab children aged eight and under already outnumbered Jewish children by 40,000 (630,000 to 590,000), and that by the end of the century there would be more Arabs under the age of 18 than Jews (1.4 million to 1.3 million). Even in Israel proper, fully half the Muslim population was below the age of 17, and whereas the number of Jewish births in 1988 remained stable at 74 percent of the total, the number of Muslim births increased by 10 percent during the year due to the ongoing increase in the number of Muslim women of child-bearing age.

HEALTH-CARE CRISIS

In 1988 Israel's once vaunted public health-care system experienced the culmination of a deep structural crisis that had been building up for some years. A strike in early February—at a time when some medical professionals had already been "working to rule" for some time—by clerks, sanitation workers, and lab workers in 32 government hospitals, created chaotic and unsanitary conditions that lasted for the better part of the month. Doctors stepped up their sanctions in March, and hospital directors warned that the system was on the verge of collapse.

Doctors in hospitals run by Kupat Holim Clalit (the Histadrut-run medical insurance scheme which covered the majority of Israelis) performed only emergency operations. They were protesting the Treasury's refusal to accept a pay-raise agreement they had signed with the Kupat Holim management, which had triggered sanctions by surgeons in government-run hospitals who demanded equal terms. The feeling in the Labor party was that Finance Minister Moshe Nissim was out to "break" Kupat Holim, the Histadrut's flagship (all persons covered medically by Kupat Holim Clalit were compelled to become Histadrut members) for political purposes. By April, Kupat Holim hospitals were operating on a strictly emergency basis and the sanctions by doctors in government hospitals were in their fourth month. On June 5, the cabinet decided to establish a judicial commission to examine the entire structure of the health-care system and make recommendations.

In the meantime, the sanctions by hospital staff continued unabated, with doctors insisting on a permanent second-shift arrangement that would both eliminate the backlog of operations and other medical procedures and augment their salaries. Besides the hospital sanctions, services by Magen David Adom came to a near standstill as 900 MDA personnel protested the nonpayment of their wages, and 3,000 nurses began a "collective summer vacation" to prod the government into upholding an earlier agreement with them. On July 10, 12 MKs began a seven-day
hunger strike to demonstrate their outrage at the government’s “indifference to the collapsing health care system.” On July 15 the doctors rejected a proposal for a temporary second shift, but did agree to enter into negotiations with the Health Ministry and gradually abandoned their sanctions. On October 6, doctors in the 14 Kupat Holim hospitals said they were returning to a normal schedule after getting a “commitment” from management that a second-shift schedule would soon be introduced. The following day a delegation of doctors from government hospitals met with Finance Minister Nissim to seek wage parity with their colleagues in Kupat Holim.

The restoration of regular hospital service came not a moment too soon, as September and October saw a polio scare and it was decided to vaccinate everyone in Israel and the territories below the age of 40. The polio virus was found in the sewage of 27 of 70 localities examined. The outbreak, which claimed one life and infected 11 other persons, and was apparently caused or exacerbated by the country’s inadequate sewerage system, was officially declared over in mid-November, after nearly 3.5 million Israelis and another million people in the territories had been vaccinated.

ISRAELI ARABS

Israel’s Arab population was in the news in 1988 primarily because of its declared solidarity—which sometimes went beyond mere words—with the uprising in the territories. (See the section on the intifada.) Various politicians and “security sources” warned of “irredentist tendencies” among the country’s Arab population that were being intensified by the uprising. At a mass rally in Nazareth on January 23, Labor MK Abdel Wahab Darousha called Defense Minister Rabin a “murderer” and announced his resignation from the Labor party; he was later elected to the Knesset at the head of an all-Arab party. In March the Communist party’s Nazareth-based daily al-Ithihad was shut down for a week by the Interior Ministry, ostensibly for publishing “inflammatory articles.” However, as this measure was enacted six days before the annual Land Day general strike, some observers saw it as an attempt to prevent possible incitement connected with that day. Land Day itself was relatively quiet in Israel, in striking contrast to the situation in the territories.

That Israel’s Arabs had legitimate grievances of their own was documented in a comprehensive report issued by the International Center for Peace in the Middle East. Summing up the results of a study conducted by a Jewish-Arab research team headed by Prof. Henry Rosenfeld of Haifa University, the report, entitled The Condition and Status of the Arabs in Israel, found that their condition was generally deplorable and their status second-class.

“Startling and alarming” was the report’s description of the situation in the realm of social welfare. Fully 40 percent of all Israeli Arab families were found to be
subsisting below the poverty line, with many homes lacking even the most basic facilities. (Following the polio outbreak, the deputy mayor of the Galilee village of Rama, Basep Ghattas, told a Technion symposium on the state of the country’s sewerage systems that because the government had failed to approve building plans, public sanitation in Arab villages had deteriorated to “catastrophic” levels and the polio rate among Israeli Arabs was 17 times higher than among Israeli Jews.) The dropout rate from the educational system was 46 percent for Israeli Arab teenagers leaving school (despite the existence of the compulsory education law), as compared with 6.3 percent for Jewish teenagers. The disparity between the country’s majority and minority population groups was equally pronounced in housing. While only 1.1 percent of Israeli Jews lived in conditions of severe overcrowding, in Arab locales the figure was 26.4 percent.

The report’s most damning finding was that in many cases these conditions were the result of deliberate government policy which in practice resulted in discrimination. The lack of government-approved master plans for Arab villages had already been addressed in the Markowitz Report in 1987 (AJYB 1989, p. 429). In 1988, about 460 illegally constructed buildings, many of them dwellings, were demolished in the Arab sector. When 15 such structures were demolished in the village of Taibe on a single day, November 7, three days of rioting ensued, followed by a general strike of the country’s entire Arab population on November 15. Israeli Arab leaders reiterated their long-standing contention that the government’s land-expropriations policy, combined with the absence of master plans for towns and villages, had left the Arab population no choice but to build “illegal” homes. A statement released by the Interior Ministry on November 7 said that the structures that had been demolished in Taibe had been built “on agricultural land where construction is prohibited and thus constituted a provocation against the rule of law.”

40TH-ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The muted atmosphere in Israel caused by the intifada had its effect on the planned events and celebrations to mark the 40th anniversary of the state’s establishment. Aggravating the gloomy mood was a steep decline in incoming tourism. In the evening of Independence Day some 45,000 people gathered at Ramat Gan National Stadium to view a pageant staged by the IDF which was also televised live. Among the winners of the Israel Prize for lifetime achievements—traditionally awarded on Independence Day evening—were Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek, the Talmud scholar Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, the educator and community activist Arye Lova Eliav, and the veteran singer Shoshana Damari. The original Declaration of Independence was on display at the Knesset, and in Tel Aviv the document’s signing in 1948 was reenacted.

An extravaganza to mark the closing of the 40th-anniversary celebrations (October 13) was a performance at the foot of Masada of Mahler’s Second (Resurrection)
Symphony by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Zubin Mehta. Gregory Peck, Yves Montand, and other notables also took part. Four thousand tickets were available, from $150 and up, and the majority were sold abroad. The biggest scheduled event of all, a performance of Verdi's opera *Nabucco* outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, at a cost of $11.5 million within the framework of the Israel Festival/Jerusalem, was canceled, reportedly because the *intifada* had deterred financial backers, though production problems were also cited.

**Culture**

**THE ARTS**

As part of the country's 40th-anniversary celebrations, the Tel Aviv Municipality and the Ministry of Education and Culture sponsored a Festival of Original Plays composed of seven new productions and eight revivals of classic Israeli dramas. The most controversial of the new works was Yehoshua Sobol's *Jerusalem Syndrome*, ostensibly about ultranationalist extremism during the Jewish revolt in 70 CE but with clear allusions to modern-day Israel. Sobol, some of whose plays, notably *A Jewish Soul* and *The Palestinian Woman*, had infuriated the Israeli Right in the past, said the new production was meant as a statement about nationalist fanaticism as such. When Herut and Tehiya hotheads tried to shout down the performers at a performance in Tel Aviv on January 9, fistfights and heated verbal exchanges broke out in the audience. About a week later both Sobol and Gedalia Besser, the artistic directors of the Haifa Municipal Theater, announced their resignation because of "unrelenting interference by politicians" in their work.

The year's major sustained cultural offering, the Israel Festival/Jerusalem (May 14–June 11), sold 100,000 tickets of the 130,000 available—a percentage that the festival's artistic director, Oded Kotler, said was more than creditable given the distinctly unfestive atmosphere generated by the Palestinian uprising, and nowhere more so (in Israel) than Jerusalem. The festival offerings included a Habimah production of *The Dybbuk* directed by Poland's Andrzej Wajda and a staging of the classic Yiddish play in dance form by the Maurice Bejart Ballet.

At the 5th International Jerusalem Film Festival, organized by the Israel Film Archive/Jerusalem Cinematheque, more than 100 films were screened in ten days (June 30–July 9). Filmmakers from Asia (including Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), Africa (Tanzania, Mali, and Senegal), and Eastern Europe (notably the USSR, which also sent an official delegation, the first Soviet cultural delegation to visit Israel since 1967) were represented. The 19 Israeli feature films released in 1988 drew about two million viewers, or 16 percent of the total number of tickets sold to films in Israel during the year (12.5 million). Two of the most interesting Israeli features were *Avia's Summer*, set in Palestine under the British Mandate, and based on the childhood experiences of the film's star and director, the veteran actress Gila
Almagor, who had already scored major local successes with book and stage versions; and Because of That War, a powerful documentary directed by Orna Ben-Dor Niv, relating the stories of two Holocaust survivors, one from Warsaw and the other from Salonika, and the devastating effect their wartime experiences had on their children, Yehuda Poliker, an Israeli rock star, and Ya'acov Gilad, a producer/songwriter who was Poliker's collaborator. In 1987 Poliker had released an extraordinary album called Ashes and Dust which sold 50,000 copies in Israel despite—or, some would say, because of—its theme: the Holocaust and its impact on the "second generation."

In October the Interior Ministry's Film and Theater Censorship Board banned Martin Scorsese's film The Last Temptation of Christ for screening in Israel. The vote was 16-3 and followed heavy pressure exerted by local Christian activists and pro-Israeli fundamentalist groups abroad. The producers and the local distributors were expected to appeal the banning to the Supreme Court.

A musical event that seemed to have carved out a solid niche for itself, both locally and internationally, was the Red Sea Jazz Festival, held in Eilat at the end of August. Some 15,000 tickets were sold for the four-day event, which featured 21 groups and individual artists, a third of them from abroad. In the realm of classical music, a major event was the first-ever visit to Israel by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, an event whose political overtones were unmistakable, given the cool relations between Israel and Austria since the Waldheim election. Jerusalemites accorded the orchestra no more than a "correct" reception—despite the fact that the guest conductor was Leonard Bernstein, an immensely popular figure in Israel—but in Tel Aviv, where the audiences were apparently less politically motivated, the orchestra's performances of Mahler's Sixth Symphony drew rapturous ovations.

JUDAICA

April saw the opening of a spacious new wing for Jewish ceremonial art at the Israel Museum, where viewers could marvel at the 500-year-old "Rothschild Miscellany" and rare items from the fabled Stieglitz collection. In June the museum exhibited part of the "Aleppo Codex," the earliest known manuscript of the full text of the Bible, compiled in Tiberias more than a thousand years ago. The "Codex" survived the upheavals in the Middle East over the centuries, being housed in Jerusalem, Cairo, and finally in Aleppo, Syria, where it was thought to have been destroyed when a mob set fire to the Aleppo synagogue in 1947, in the wake of the UN resolution to partition Palestine. However, although about a quarter of the priceless document had been ravaged, the remnant was smuggled into Israel via Turkey in 1958 and presented to then President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi.

The Second International Judaica Fair, held in May at the Jerusalem Convention Center, drew enthusiastic crowds to view ritual objects, manuscripts, paintings, and other items. The fair culminated in an auction conducted by Sotheby's at which
collectors spent a total of about $1 million, including $92,000 for an 18th-century German spice box and $47,300 for an illuminated 1732 ketubah (marriage contract) from Padua—the highest price ever paid at auction for a ketubah.

On August 30, the Israel Museum announced that it had received from an anonymous donor a tiny ivory pomegranate, 1.68 inches high, which was apparently in use in King Solomon's Temple nearly three millennia ago—the first relic ever attributed to the First Temple. The pomegranate, which bore an incised inscription in ancient Hebrew script ("Belonging to the Temple of the Lord, holy to the priests"), was probably carried on a scepter as part of the Temple ritual. It was purchased as a gift to the museum for $550,000 by "an anonymous friend of Israel from Basel, Switzerland," in the words of a Tourism Ministry press release.

ARCHAEOLOGY

In April the Israel Museum mounted a major exhibition of finds from the Chalcolithic period in the area of present-day Israel. Many of the 6,000-year-old items were on public display for the first time. In October the Hebrew University of Jerusalem announced that a team headed by Prof. Amihai Mazar of the university's School of Archaeology and Prof. Pierre de Mirosherdi of the French Research Center in Jerusalem had discovered the remains of a 5,000-year-old temple near the town of Beit Shemesh, southwest of Jerusalem. The temple and its associated cultic objects were expected to help further the understanding of the development of religion and society in the area some 2,000 years before the appearance there of the people of Israel as a nation. The excavation was funded by the National Geographic Society.

In May the extensive ruins of the Roman and Byzantine city of Beit She'an, featuring a large and well-preserved Roman amphitheater, were officially opened to the public. Local promoters were heartened by forecasts that the site would eventually draw half a million tourists a year, who would provide a much-needed economic injection for a sleepy town best known as the home of Herut's David Levy and as a way station between the Jordan Rift Valley and the country's north—its strategic location, indeed, having been the reason for its importance to the ancients.

Egypt demanded that Israel give back all the archaeological finds, apparently numbering in the thousands, which it had removed from the Sinai desert during the Israeli occupation of the peninsula from 1967–1982. In the meantime, the Jerusalem Post reported, quoting the director of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo, that Egypt was prohibiting Israeli archaeologists from conducting excavations in the Sinai and even from taking part in international digs.
Personalia

On February 23, President Chaim Herzog was reelected for a second (and final) five-year term by the Knesset, by a vote of 82–2 in a secret ballot. A surprisingly large number of MKs (18) chose to cast blank ballots. Herzog took the oath of allegiance on May 9, officially beginning his new term.

Two key appointments were made in the security sphere. On April 1, the interim Shin Bet director appointed following the resignation of Avraham Shalom in the wake of the No. 300 bus scandal was replaced by a permanent chief. The name of the Shin Bet’s director would not be made public while he held office, but it was revealed that the interim head for 18 months had been Yosef Harmelin, who had previously headed the Shin Bet from 1964–1975. The resignation of Amiram Nir, the prime minister’s antiterrorism adviser who was implicated in the Iran-contra affair, also took effect on April 1. Nir, who had been appointed by Shimon Peres and had held the post for more than three years, was replaced a month later by Col. Yigal Carmon, a former intelligence officer who had also served in the Civil Administration in the occupied territories. (On December 1, Nir, aged 38, was killed in a plane crash in Mexico.)

Changes also occurred in the Supreme Court. On April 26, Justice Menachem Eilon was named the court’s deputy president, replacing Justice Miriam Ben-Porat who retired at the mandatory age of 70. However, Justice Ben-Porat did not remain inactive for long: on June 14, she was elected state comptroller by the Knesset (the vote was 67–16, and 13 abstentions), following the resignation from that post of Judge Yaakov Malz (May 15)—after only a year—in order to be appointed a Supreme Court justice. Ben-Porat took up her duties as state comptroller and ombudswoman on July 4.

Personalities who died during the year included Prof. Ze’ev Vilnai, an Israel Prize winner who was a renowned geographer, veteran guide, and prolific author about the Land of Israel, on January 21, aged 88; Ilona Feher, famed violin teacher whose pupils included Shlomo Mintz and Shmuel Ashkenazi, on February 1, aged 86; Rafi Nelson, colorful founder of the Eilat holiday village near Taba, on February 6, aged 58; Prof. Yosef Nedava, historian of the Revisionist movement and a founding member of the Greater Israel Movement and the Tehiya party, on February 18, aged 73; Yehoshua Rotenstreich, an eminent lawyer who served as chairman of the Israel Press Council and was a senior member of the commission of inquiry into the Pollard affair, on March 10, aged 78; Alexander Bein, Israel Prize laureate in Zionist historiography and Israel’s first State Archivist (1956–1971), on June 21, aged 85; Ya’ir Hurvitz, a major Israeli poet of the 1970s and 1980s who was awarded the Alterman Prize and the Prime Minister’s Prize for Creativity, on July 26, aged 49; Zerubavel Gilad, a veteran poet who wrote the “anthem” of the prestate Palmach underground, on August 12, aged 75; Prof. Akiva Ernst Simon, Israel Prize laureate for education and an activist in promoting Jewish-Arab coexistence, on August 18, aged 89; Siona Tagger, a veteran artist who blended Western impressionism with
a distinctive vision of the orient, on June 15, aged 89; Prof. Shmuel Ettinger, renowned historian who carried out path-breaking studies of anti-Semitism, president of the Israel Historical Society, and director of the Center for Research and Documentation of East European Jewry, on September 22, aged 69; Oved Ben-Ami, a leading industrialist who was considered the father of the Israeli diamond industry and who founded the city of Netanya and served as its mayor for 42 years, on October 17, aged 83; Menachem Savidor, the Speaker of the 10th Knesset and a longtime Liberal-party activist, on November 2, aged 70; Baruch Venger, who presided over the growth of the Galilee development town of Carmiel to a booming city of 20,000, serving as mayor since 1973, on November 22, aged 58; and Bernard Cherrick, longtime vice-president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who was dubbed "Mr. University" for his tireless efforts on its behalf, on November 22, aged 74.

Ralph Mandel