advocating the creation of a Palestinian state – was accused by the more radical factions of being too soft on the security establishment.

Peace Now struck back by portraying the radicals' moves as unrealistic and, indeed, counterproductive as far as the goal of mobilizing public support for a compromise was concerned. This internal strife severely eroded the leading status of Peace Now, which had most of the material resources, as well as the best network of external contacts, both inside Israel and abroad. In sum, factionalism hindered the peace activists' effort to offer a viable alternative policy, wasted energy and detracted generally from the movement's credibility as a rational and effective force.

Fourth, the peace movement was caught between the conflicting expectations of Jews and Arabs. The Israeli Jewish public demanded that the activists' primary loyalties be clearly expressed. Peace activity was tolerated only if the movement declared itself an integral part of the Israeli collective and subordinated any other interests to the national consensus. Open identification with the Palestinian cause was considered disloyal or even treasonous.

Palestinians, for their part, expected too much from the peace movement. They underestimated the effect on peace activists of the pressure to submit to the national consensus, and failed to see where the movement's fundamental loyalties actually lay. The more moderate Palestinian leaders in the West Bank, with whom the movement had carried on a prolonged dialogue, became increasingly impatient with its hesitation and apparent hyper-cautiousness. The peace movement, in turn, found it dif-ficult to deal with the Palestinians' silence that followed terrorist acts.

Palestinians were also disappointed by the refusal of most peace groups to support their demand for a total and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, and for the immediate creation of a fully sovereign Palestinian state. Moreover, many Palestinians anticipated that the *Intifada* would spark a huge wave of protest within Israel, similar to that during the Lebanon War – an expectation that came to nothing.

In the beginning, Palestinians ascribed the restrained support of their potential Israeli allies to the relatively few Israeli casualties and the fact that the confrontation was confined to the occupied territories. Eventually, however, they realized that the major reason for the limited protest was that for Israelis, the Palestinian issue strikes at the very core of the Israeli state, and that stronger action would threaten their connection to the national consensus. Thus Palestinians – like the Israeli mainstream – asked that the peace movement take a clear stand. Since the vast majority of the movement's activists considered themselves to be Zionists first, even if they rejected the majority view of the Palestinian problem, there was really only one side they could choose.

FIFTH, THE ISRAELI PEACE MOVEMENT FOUNDERED ON THE ROCKS OF ITS own self-image. Comparing the worldviews of the Israeli peace movement to those of its Western counterparts is misleading. The core themes of Western peace activism: post-materialist counter-culture, anti-statism, environmentalism and anti-nuclearism do not play a major role in Israel. Neither are internationalist and pacifist convictions to be found on the Israeli agenda. Peace – which in the Israeli context means the absence of war – although desirable per se, is advocated by most Israeli peace activists primarily for its anticipated contribution to the security and the well-being of the nation – core beliefs which do not differ significantly from those of the political mainstream.

Moreover, like the largest segment of the Israeli body politic, the peace movement argues for political realism and simultaneously claims to be guided by universal moral principles. While its members reject

several of the main tenets on which official foreign and security policies are based – the portrayal of the Israeli-Arab conflict as a zero-sum game, the fundamental imperative for Israel to maintain extensive territorial security margins and the perception that Israel's room for manoeuvre is perilously small – the peace movement seems nevertheless incapable of cutting the cord which connects it to the political mainstream. It remains torn between its powerful need to belong and a sincere desire to change the gloomy reality.

THE STRENGTH OF THIS PRIMORDIAL ATTACHMENT IS REFLECTED IN THE highly emotional reactions of some of the movement's prominent figures to the escalation of Palestinians' anti-Israeli attitudes following the outbreak of the Persian Gulf crisis. Knesset Member Yosi Sarid, regarded by many as the personification of the movement, responded sharply to Palestinian support of Saddam Hussein, indicating that he would not be available for further dialogue in the near future. His statement regarding this turnabout goes a long way to explaining the movement's ambivalence towards the Palestinians:

> I don't feel betrayed or cheated, for I never believed in them.... What I did believe was that they had reached a sufficient level of maturity to understand where their own interest really lay.... I thought that through a rather painful process they had realized that it was in their own interest to accept and recognize the existence of the state of Israel.... What actually happened was that they acted in total contradiction to their own fundamental cause and by doing so caused all of us enormous damage.... By their senseless, nasty behaviour they turned the wheel back to where it had been ten or twenty years ago.[1]

Sarid's new position was given lot of attention, but was not embraced by all peace activists. Shulamit Aloni, a politician also associated with the movement, dismissed Sarid's argument and encapsulated the peace movement's central dilemma:

Bernice Eisenstein

> Why should I be disappointed with the Palestinian posture? Have I done something for them? The Israeli Left is nothing if not an integral part of the Israeli government, of the establishment.... We tried to raise a moral voice. We were the opposition, asked questions and tried to change the agenda. We shouted and inquired.... However, de facto we accomplished nothing.
>
> The government has continued to dominate the territories, to ignore human rights there, to destroy and to kill, and we are part of that because we did not rebel. We are law-abiding citizens. We serve in the army. We do not break the law which prohibits meetings with PLO officials. Therefore we are part of it. The Palestinians owe us nothing. There has been no love affair between us. I have always said that they are the enemy, and it is with the enemy that one should talk.[2]

Despite a political impact which is considerably reduced, Israel's peace movement lives on. Long periods of hibernation and even silence are typical for social movements in general and peace movements in particular. Discrete events, like Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel or the 1987 Lebanon War, are more likely than prolonged phenomena, like the *Intifada*, to stimulate a resurgence. But even in its present condition, the peace movement presents a visible challenge to the prevailing security ethos, and invests the domestic political debate with real content. Its repeated denunciation of atrocities and official misconduct continues to highlight the moral dilemmas presented by Israel's ongoing occupation. □

1. Cited in Gideon Levi. "Yosi Sarid Is Attacking," Haaretz, 24 August 1990, [In Hebrew, author's translation.]
2. Cited in Tom Segeve. "No One Should Look For Shulamit Aloni," Haaretz, 24 August 1990, [In Hebrew, author's translation.]