

Dayan Hellbent For Separate Peace

Despite Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's dramatic overtures to Israel in the past two weeks, Israeli response remains an open question. Most Jerusalem observers report widespread public sentiment for peace, and Prime Minister Menachem Begin is under increasing pressure to make tangible concessions in negotiations. The Israeli Cabinet is totally divided on this crucial question.

One fact is clear, however: Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan is feverishly trying to force Israel into a separate peace with Egypt, which would thoroughly upset the prospect of a global and permanent settlement in the Mideast.

During a four-day trip to West Germany last week, Dayan did his best to torpedo international momentum toward such an *overall* peace. Shortly after his arrival, Dayan ostentatiously visited the World War II Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, using the occasion to berate the German population for the rise of Nazi-type sentiments. Ironically, Dayan's harping on German "guilt" did not stop the Foreign Minister from holding two strategy sessions with notorious neo-Nazi Franz-Joseph Strauss. According to the Dec. 1 *Munchener Merkur*, Dayan even confided to Strauss that a separate peace with Egypt would make it "easier to march on Damascus."

On Nov. 30, Dayan tried pitting nation against nation to ensure no global settlement could be reached. Dayan called on the West Germans to take "bold leadership" within the European Economic Community *against* France, the European country consistently demanding recognition of Palestinian rights. The *Washington Post* reported that West German officials were "stunned" and "dismayed." The same day, Dayan openly stated that Israel would gladly sign a "separate peace" with Egypt, regardless of its impact on international relations and U.S.-Soviet relations. After all, he said, "We don't have to make peace with the Russians."

Fight Shapes Up

The Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* summed up the terms of debate among Israeli policymakers Nov. 28. Former *Ma'ariv* Washington correspondent Shmuel Segev identified one group led by Dayan and allied with Henry Kissinger which desires an "Egyptian option" — a separate peace with Israel. Another group, personified by former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon and aligned with U.S. policy makers around Nixon's Secretary of State William Rogers, wants a deal both with Egypt and Jordan. Aligned with the Allon camp is Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Yadin. Yadin has long advocated Israeli territorial concessions on the West Bank, and recently has been in touch with National Security Council policymakers in the U.S., who favor some form of "Palestinian entity" solution on the West Bank.

In his special Nov. 28 address before the Israeli Knesset, Begin specifically stressed that "we are not seeking a separate peace with Egypt," and appealed to Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon to join in the regional peace effort.

However, Begin has left himself open to Dayan's antics by his continued refusal to recognize self-determination rights for Palestinian Arabs and by his strong denunciation of West European peace moves. According to the Nov. 28 Jerusalem Domestic Service, Begin "informed the peoples of Europe that they are the last that should offer advice which might endanger the remnants of the Jewish people" since Europe had been responsible for the 1890s Dreyfus affair and for the Nazi holocaust.

Movement toward substantial concessions can be expected to come from opposition Labour Party circles led by former Foreign Minister Abba Eban. On the NBC-TV "Meet the Press" program Nov. 27, Eban endorsed a "Benelux solution" for the Israeli-West Bank-Jordan area in which three distinct national groups — Palestinian Jewish, Palestinian Arab, and Jordanian — would seek a form of coexistence similar to that of Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg in Europe.

Within the Israeli Knesset, a "coalition of doves" numbering at least 15 has recently formed in favor of mobilizing the Israeli population behind recognition of some form of Palestinian Arab self-determination, according to the Nov. 27 *London Observer*.

French Ready For Important Role At Geneva

The government of French President Giscard d'Estaing is in line to play a major role in any durable peace settlement in the Middle East that results from an early Geneva peace conference. Since the historic visit of Egyptian President Sadat to Jerusalem, the French have been capitalizing on their reputation as the leading defender of the Arab cause in Europe to put themselves in a position to assume perhaps even the co-chairmanship at Geneva.

France enjoys important political leverage among both the "moderate" Egyptians and Saudis, and the radical "PLO-Libya" camps among the Arabs. This unique position is strengthened by the fact that French intelligence networks extend throughout the region.

With Egypt and Saudi Arabia, France has been working up a plan over several years for the French Dassault firm to construct a major armaments industry in Egypt. With the Saudis providing financing, that deal could supply all Arab armaments needs. More recently, according to the Egyptian paper *Al-Ahram*, plans have been developed for joint Franco-Egyptian construction of nuclear power plants along the Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts.

Among the "radicals," French political capital is high because of the Giscard government's persistent support for direct Palestinian representation at a Geneva conference, advocacy of a Palestinian state, and Israeli withdrawal to her 1967 borders.

While there has been no public or official evidence of French involvement in arrangements for the Sadat trip