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Issue No. 54 Texas

November 30th, 2005

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Welcome

This has been a busy couple of weeks for Israeli politics, as we introduce Amir Peretz to e-News readers. Remember to take advantage of the web site if you do not have the earlier issues mentioned on this page.

A new feature begins in this issue – Looking Back – which, all being well & *inshallah*, will be included at the end of each month.

The editor/author/typist receives his graduate degree within a couple of weeks, and has four final papers due this week, hence the slight delay in publication.

Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net & check the web for back issues.

Israel Politics

Early this month an internal Labour party election for the leadership of the party was won by *Histadrut* (trade union) leader Amir Peretz with 40% of the vote. Shimon Peres received 40% of the vote, and Benjamin Ben Eliezer the remaining 20%.

Peretz was born in 1952, in Boujad, Morocco, with the name Armand, but emigrated with his family in 1956. (Issues 29 & 30 of *e-NEWS* give more detail of the immigration of the Mizrahi Jews during the 50s and 60s.) Like many other Jews that had grown up in African, Arab or Persian countries his family settled in one of the *ma'abarot*, settlement towns newly constructed by the Israeli government, usually in the more arid, underdeveloped parts of the country. The Peretz family settled in Sderot, a *ma'abarot* in the southwest of Israel, close to Gaza. Peretz fought in the battle for Mitla Pass during the 1973 Yom Kippur war, and was seriously wounded in the action.

In 1983, after leaving the army, Amir became mayor of Sderot. He has long been a member of Peace Now, an Israeli organization that has frequently clashed with Likud policies on negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs. Peace Now supports the establishment of a Palestinian state, as well as the withdrawal from Gaza.

In 1999 Peretz split with Labour to found the Am Ehad, *One Nation*, political party (see *e-NEWS* issues 23, 24 & 32). This merged with Labour in summer of last year, 2004.



Amir (Armand) Peretz
(b. 1952)

Within hours of his election to leadership of the Labour party, Peretz announced that Labour would be pulling out of the coalition with Likud, thereby precipitating early elections, which have been scheduled for March 28 of next year. A victory by a Labour party led by Peretz would bring in the first non-Ashkenazi Prime Minister in Israel's history.

Peretz has expressed his desire to see more action taken on the social welfare of Israelis, and has expressed his frustration that the incessant focus on security has caused pressing social issues to be neglected.

Ariel Sharon founded the Likud party in 1973, after the Yom Kippur war, and it has dominated politics in Israel since it came to power for the first time in 1977.

Soon after Peretz won the leadership of Labour and called for early elections, Sharon announced that he was quitting the party he had formed in 1973 and would enter the forthcoming elections at the head of a new centrist party, which he has named Kadima, 'Forward'.

In withdrawing from Gaza Sharon went against the wishes of many of those in Likud. His declared intention to make further withdrawals (even minor ones) from settlements in the West Bank would be even more disruptive to the Likud members. Sharon does have some support from Likud party members, however, and 14 of them have joined him in forming this new party, including 5 cabinet ministers. These do not include the defense minister Shaul Mofaz, nor Sharon's rival Benjamin Netanyahu, the leading candidate to replace Sharon as leader of Likud.

From Labour Sharon has also enlisted the support of Shimon Peres, the 82-year old leader defeated by Peretz, and Haim Ramon, another minister in the current coalition.

Islam

Sura 2, *The Cow*

Though the principles of Islam seem to be derived by consensus as much as by explicit statements in the Quran, one Sura that presents a number of the key tenets of Islam is the second sura, also called 'The Cow.' It is one of the longest of the sura, so we shall just select a few of the relevant verses:

[2.2] This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil). Authority and divine origin of the Qur'an

[2.26(29)] He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed God is creator of heaven and earth

Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things.

[2.33(35)] And We said: O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden and eat from it a plenteous (food) wherever you wish and do not approach this tree, for then you will be of the unjust. Satan caused Adam to sin

[2.34(36)] But the Shaitan made them both fall from it, and caused them to depart from that (state) in which they were; ...

[2.81(87)] And most certainly We gave Musa the Book and We sent apostles after him one after another; God has given the precious scriptures, which the Qur'an confirms

[2.82(87)] and We gave Isa (*Jesus*), the son of Marium, clear arguments and strengthened him with the holy spirit, What! whenever then an apostle came to you with that which your souls did not desire, you were insolent so you called some liars and some you slew.

[2.92(97)] Say: Whoever is the enemy of Jibreel-- for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allah's command, verifying that which is before it and guidance and good news for the believers.

[2.100(106)] Whatever communications We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things? Later scriptures abrogate the former if there is a difference. Even later versions of the Qur'an can replace earlier ones.

[2.110(116)] And they say: Allah has taken to himself a son. Glory be to Him; rather, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him. Allah could not beget a son

[2.118(125)] And when We made the House a pilgrimage for men and a (place of) security, and: Appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrahim. And We enjoined Ibrahim and Ismail saying: Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves. Islam is the true faith of Abraham

[2.123(130)] And who forsakes the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool, and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous.

Excerpted from *Ishmael, My Brother*, by Anne Cooper. Operation Mobilization, 1985.

Looking Back - November

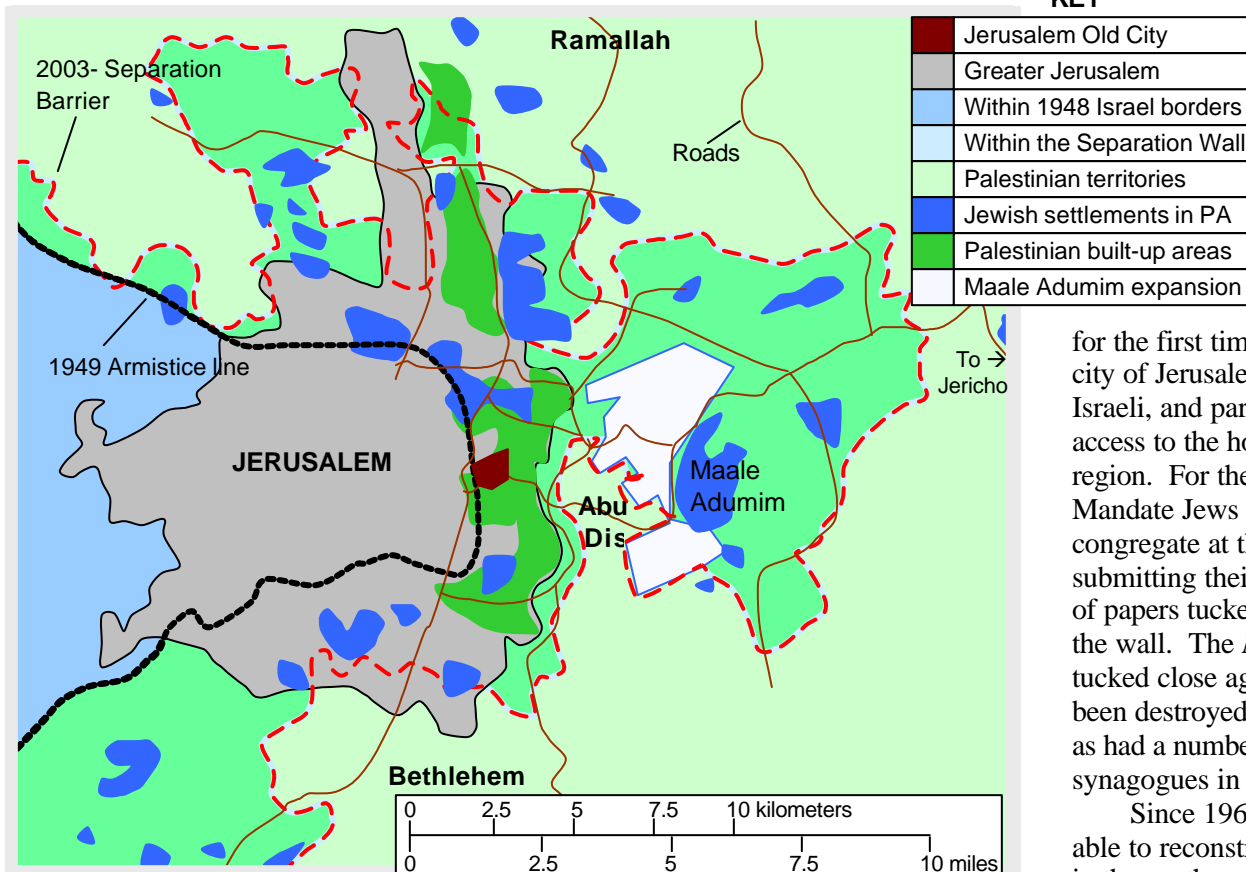
Looking Back - November

1 year ago	Europe: Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh killed in the Netherlands (Nov.1) Iraq: US forces assault Fallujah (Nov.5-22), Aid worker Margaret Hassan is captured/killed (Nov.26) West Bank: Yasser Arafat dies after short illness (Nov.11)
2 years ago	West Bank: Qorei government cabinet formed (Nov.12) Turkey: Istanbul synagogues bombs kill 33 (Nov.16), UK bank & consulate bombs kill 27 (Nov.20) Israel: Ariel Sharon proposes evacuating Gaza settlements (Nov.22)
10	Israel: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is shot dead at a peace rally (Nov.4)
50 years ago	Jordan: King Hussein (1953-99) implements Jordan's amended constitution (Nov.1) Iran: Iran joins the Baghdad Pact (Middle East Treaty Organization) (Nov.3) Morocco: Mohammad V of Morocco restored to throne after being deposed by France in 1953 (Nov.16)
100	India: Ahmadiyya founder Mirza (b1839) rescued from assault by conservative Muslims in Amritsar Armenia-Azerbaijan: Violence erupts in Ghanja (Kirovabad) Russia: Pogroms continue (Oct-Nov) in the Russian <i>Pale</i> after Nicholas II creates a constitutional monarchy
1,000	Russia: Kazan, the capital city of Islamic Tartarstan, is founded. (Located 500mls east of Moscow)

Jerusalem

During the period of the Mandate (1922-1948) Jerusalem developed towards the west. The Arab population occupied much of the Old City, and the suburbs to the south, east and north. The 1948 War of Independence saw the more modern western portion of the city incorporated into the new State of Israel, while the Old City and east Jerusalem fell under the control of the Jordanian monarchy.

Gradually, in the period since then, built-up Jerusalem expanded to include the area shown in gray on the map, both within Israel itself and in the Jordanian-controlled West Bank. The area east of the 1949 line is still primarily Arab, and



stretches north as far as the perimeter of Ramallah.

As a result of the 6-Day War in 1967 Israel acquired the whole of the West Bank, and

for the first time, the whole of the city of Jerusalem. This opened up Israeli, and particularly Jewish, access to the holy sites around the region. For the first time since the Mandate Jews were able to congregate at the Western Wall, submitting their prayers in the form of papers tucked into the cracks in the wall. The *Maghreb Quarter*, tucked close against the wall, had been destroyed by the Arab Army, as had a number of historic synagogues in the area.

Since 1967 Israel has been able to reconstruct a Jewish Quarter in the southern part of the Old City,

between the Armenian Quarter in the south west, and the Temple Mount (Haram Al Sharif) on the east.

During the period since 1967 a number of Israeli settlements have been constructed within the occupied territories of the West Bank. These are shown in blue on the map, where the Arab built-up areas (outside of Jerusalem proper) are shown in green. The continued violence is cited by Sharon's government as the reason for constructing a Segregation Barrier to separate the Arab and Jewish populations. This wall, as it affects Jerusalem, is shown in red on the map. The wall can be seen to include many of the settlements in the vicinity of Jerusalem, including one of the largest West Bank settlements, that of Maale Adumim. In recent months the Israeli government has announced plans to expand Maale Adumim by another 3500 dwellings, in the area indicated between the city and the settlement. This is part of a plan to make the settlement contiguous with Jerusalem itself.

Palestinian Arab concerns with this extension of the Separation Barrier is that it prevents a contiguous stretch of land for the establishment of a Palestinian state. For about 20% of its length the barrier follows the line of the original 1949 Armistice agreement, but for much of its length it is inside the West Bank. On this map the areas where the wall is within the West Bank territory are shaded in light green.

The area between Maale Adumim and Jericho is the northern part of the Judean desert, where it is extremely difficult to construct roads. If the separation wall does enclose an expanded Maale Adumim, as seems to be happening, the salient will effectively split the West Bank into two, further dividing any territory that would be allocated to the Palestinian Authority.

