

REVIVAL

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News

Eitan Cabel MK elected as new Secretary General

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On June 16, 2005 Eitan Cabel MK was elected by the Central Committee to be the Labor Party's new Secretary General. The position was vacant for 18 months, when current Minister of the Interior, Ophir Pines-Paz resigned from the post. Prior to his election, Eitan Cabel was Chairman of the parliamentary faction and led Labor's successful nation-wide municipal election campaign in 2003. Eitan Cabel MK was first elected to the Knesset in 1996.



Commenting to Revival after his election Cabel said "I entered the position – with one aim – to succeed. The task at hand is much greater than it seems, because the very future of Israeli democracy is at stake. The question before us is this: Will there be an alternative for government in Israel or not? The main challenge is to win the next elections. No area will be left untouched – from renewing party policy, to reviving the organization – including the party's financial situation."

Primaries for Party Leader Postponed

Irregularities in registration drive to be scrutinized before new date is set

The internal election for a new Party Chairman and Candidate for Prime Minister, that was scheduled for June 28 2005, has been postponed due to evidence of irregularities in the registration drive held in the lead up to the poll. The Central Committee voted to give the new Secretary General, Eitan Cabel MK, the authority to conduct an independent investigation of all registration forms.

A preliminary investigation has suggested that as many as 25% of new party members registered unlawfully.

This will be the first time that any party in Israel has conducted such a wide check of its membership base. The investigation is expected to take at least one month at the end of which the Central Committee will select a new date for the internal election.

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In shadow of the Disengagement, the battle over Education Reform heats up - Editorial on page 2

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Ephraim Sneh MK elected Chairman of the Knesset Faction

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Ephraim Sneh MK, former Minister of Health and Transport, was elected unanimously as Chairman of the party Knesset Faction on June 20, 2005. Commenting to Revival after his election Sneh said "The Knesset is an important political arena and I will do my utmost so that all our members of Knesset will work in harmony. After the summer recess we shall face a tough parliamentary battle over the 2006 budget and with regard to the next steps in the peace process after the disengagement. I believe that there is an unbridgeable gap between us and the Likud concerning these two issues and hence we will most probably find ourselves in a general election campaign by the end of the year."

Editor's note

Education – the next frontier

In the background of the battle over the disengagement, Israel has been debating a major reform of the country's education system. In 2004 the government set up the National Taskforce for the Advancement of Education, headed by Shlomo Dovrat – one of Israel's leading hitech tycoons. The report of the National Taskforce was delivered last year and it is the source of much controversy, especially amongst the teachers' unions who are fighting key recommendations via a national campaign on billboards and in the media.

Fundamental proposals include moving from a six day to a five day school week, longer school days, changes in the working conditions for teachers, a large reduction in teacher numbers, more autonomy for school principals, reducing class sizes and more.

Every reform, especially such a major reform as this, involves pain for the stakeholders. In this case the extent of the opposition can be traced back to the flawed make-up and procedure of the Taskforce. The Taskforce was comprised of academics, former teaching professionals, business people and community leaders. There were no representatives of the Teachers' Unions or the Ministry of Education – nor were there parliamentarians. The consultation process with the public and other interest groups was sporadic, without clear targets for community input.

In early June, the Education Minister announced partial, one-sided, implementation of the report in 33 municipalities for the 2005/6 school year. The same day, the Teaching Unions launched stop work measures in those municipalities.

While Labor recognizes the urgent need to overhaul the education system, a system that Labor nurtured in the early days of the state and produced results that were the envy of the world, we cannot and will not accept implementing the reform without the agreement of the teaching profession. There are many elements in the report and what is now required are serious and honest negotiations about the recommendations with all the stakeholders: students, parents, teachers and the government.

Come September 1st, the traditional start of the school year (in the middle of the Disengagement) the unions are preparing for the "mother of all strikes" to protest the Education Minister's one sided moves – it seems as though Israel's summer heat will continue well into spring.

Guy Spigelman
Editor

A copy of a presentation summarizing the proposed reform in English, is available by writing to guy@i-tech.org.il

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Coverage of the Socialist International Council Meeting in Tel Aviv and Ramallah

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Nava Eisen (Israeli Labor Party), PA representative, Pia Locatelli (SIW President), Marlene Haas (SIW Secretary General), Esther Levan-Mordoch, Naomi Chazan (Israeli Yahad-Meretz) at the Socialist International Women Meeting held recently in Tel Aviv

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Socialism is a live and well in Tel Aviv and Ramallah

By Colette Avital MK and Avshalom Vilan MK



Colette Avital MK addressing the SI Council in Ramallah, to the right is Naabil Shaath, Palestinian Vice Prime Minister

In a world where Communism has been defeated, where Liberal parties find it difficult to identify a common cause, where the 'end of history' and end to great ideologies has been declared, in an age of globalization where the gaps are widening between the technologically advanced, developed and wealthy countries and the countries of third world that are subject to poverty, Social Democratic parties from around the world still gather enthusiastically to play an active role in the Socialist International (SI).

The Socialist International, which is made up of 166 parties on 5 continents has been responsible for initiating democratic reforms across the world: The Socialist International Women brought about significant representation of women in Parliaments in many states across Africa and Latin America, the Peace Process between Israel and Egypt was as a result of a secret initiative and a lot of work behind the scenes of leaders of the SI at that time including German Chancellor Willy Brandt, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme.

Today the SI continues to play an important role in creating the conditions for an ongoing dialogue between different countries that do not have direct relations, including in Israel's case with Iraq and Lebanon.

By holding the last Council meeting in Tel Aviv and Ramallah, the SI made a statement. After 4 years of Intifada, when the international Left has adopted anti-Israel attitudes and utilized every opportunity to criticize Israel from every podium, the SI decided to hold its annual meeting here, in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to express its solidarity with the peoples of the region and to express its hope for peace.

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This was the aim of the 300 delegates comprised of Party Leaders, Ministers, MP's, women's groups and unions, from the Ukraine to Argentina, from Tunisia to Australia that came to Israel. They voiced active support for the Disengagement plan of the Israeli government and pointed out that it was a first step that needs to be followed by other steps.

By holding the last Council meeting in Tel Aviv and Ramallah, the Socialist International made a statement.

At the start of the 21st century the SI is an organization that faces fundamental questions over its identity. What is the future for Social Democracy in the age of globalization? How do we realize social justice in a world system of one superpower and the capitalism of the free market? How does modern socialism cope with high levels of unemployment that have resulted from these changes? These are weighty issues that are dealt with seriously at every meeting of the SI. But this time they were examined within the context of achieving peace in the Middle East.

The latest meeting of the SI was of great international importance. It would not be overstating it to say that the mere gathering of multiple socialist parties from across the world in Israel and in the Palestinian Authority demonstrates a shift in attitude to Israel, our neighbors and on the prospects for a lasting peace in our region.

Colette Avital MK is Deputy Speaker of the Knesset and International Secretary of the Labor Party. Avshalom Vilan MK is a member of the Meretz-Yachad faction.



Palestinian President Abbas at a meeting with Colette Avital MK and Ephraim Sneh MK in Ramallah

Israeli Labor and Palestinian Fatah host Socialist International Council Meeting in Tel Aviv and Ramallah

On 23-24 May in Tel Aviv and Ramallah, the Socialist International held a meeting of its Council, with the participation of leaders and representatives from its member parties and organisations from around the world.

The Council, which convenes every six months, met on this occasion in the Middle East to underline the International's commitment to the search for peace in the region and to encourage Israelis and Palestinians to move forward along the path of dialogue and negotiation at a crucial juncture for the region's future.



Labor Chairman and Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres with outgoing President of the SI António Guterres (Right) and SI Secretary General, Luis Ayala (Left)

Under the main theme "For a Middle East in peace, with political and economic democracy: the social democratic vision", the Council meeting, hosted by the Israel Labour Party, the Israeli Yachad Party, and the Palestinian Fatah, all members of the International, held two sessions, one in Tel Aviv and the other in Ramallah.

Prior to the Council meeting, the Socialist International Women (SIW) held a bureau meeting in Tel Aviv under the title "The role of women in conflict resolution and peace building," that brought together women from Israel, the Palestinian Authority and from around the world. The bureau adopted a resolution that can be found on page 11.

More than 60 political parties attended both the SI and SIW. The representation of countries that

The theme of the Council Meeting was "For a Middle East in peace, with political and economic democracy: the social democratic vision"

usually do not attend International events, such as Mali and Honduras was noted. Former prime ministers and party leaders such as George Papandreou from Greece and Antonio Guterres from Portugal attended and participated in the panels.

The session in Tel Aviv was opened on the morning of Monday 23 with contributions from Shimon Peres, Leader of the Labour Party and Deputy Prime Minister of Israel; Imad Shakur, Member of the Palestinian National Council; Yossi Beilin, Leader of the Yachad Party from Israel; and SI President António Guterres. A number of leaders from Socialist International member parties participated in the debate on the main theme.

The President of Israel, Moshe Katsav, delivered a special address to the Council meeting and welcomed the presence of the International, acknowledging a climate of expectation with regard to latest developments in the Middle East.

In the evening, in Ramallah, the delegates to the Council were hosted by the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, who thanked the International for its continuing involvement in the search for peace in the Middle East. The Israeli delegation was invited to a separate audience with President Abbas in his suite in Ramallah following the gathering.

On Tuesday 24, the session in Ramallah was opened with addresses by Nabil Shaath, Deputy and Acting Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority; Abbas Zaki on behalf of Fatah; Avshalom Vilan, MK, of the Yachad Party; Colette Avital, MK, of the Israel Labour Party; and, SI President António Guterres. Participants continued the discussions of the previous day in Tel Aviv on the main theme.



President of Israel Moshe Katsav addressed the delegates; he is pictured here with Imad Shaqquar member of Palestinian National Council

At the end of the debates, a resolution on democracy and peace in the Middle East (see page 9 for a copy of the resolution) was introduced by Thorbjørn Jagland (Norway, DNA) on behalf of the SI Middle East Committee which he chairs, and was unanimously adopted. Other proposals such as the Review on Democratic Governance for Sustainable Development in a Global Society, a Response to the Tsunami Disaster and Reforming the UN were also debated and adopted.

(Contributions from the SI web site and Guy Rottenberg – Chairperson of Young Labor, Tel Aviv Jaffa District and Party Coordinator to the SI Summit)



At the Council Meeting (from the left): Sue West from the Australian Labor Party (ALP), Labor Leader Shimon Peres, Tara Moriarty (ALP) and Guy Spigelman, Editor of Revival

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PEACE – The Next Generation

By Eran Mozel

May was an extremely active month for Young Socialists in the world and specifically for the members of the Young Labor Leadership (“HaMishmeret HaTzeira”). At the beginning of May a study session on the sustainable culture of peace was held in Strasbourg in which several topics were discussed including: Jerusalem, resource sharing, territorial issues, refugees and peace agreements. Adir Visniya represented the Labor Young Leadership.

Young Labor Leadership was involved in the hosting of the SI (Socialist International) World Council in Tel Aviv.

A joint delegation of IUSY (International Union of Socialist Youth) and ECOSY (Young European Socialists) held a study mission to the Middle East between the 23-27/05/2005. The delegation attended the World Council of the Socialist International held in Tel Aviv and Ramallah and continued with its own agenda afterwards holding meetings with leadership of the Fatah and the Fatah Youth Organizations in Ramallah as well as with the Labor Party and the Young Labor Leadership in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.



The Israel part of the program started in Jerusalem, when the delegation paid a visit to the Willy Brandt Center under the guidance of Ran Feingold, the International Secretary of Labor Young Leadership and its representative to the Willy Brandt Center.

The visit continued in Tel-Aviv including meetings with members of the Geneva Accords Initiative, with Meretz-Yachad party Chairman Yossi Beilin, a series of discussions at the Labor Party Headquarters, with MKs Amram Mitzna and Yuli Tamir, Prof. Dan Koren and the Young Labor Leadership.

The delegation held discussions with Young Labor Leadership over the issues of a stronger struggle against Anti-Semitism, the insistence on an open and direct dialogue with the Fatah Youth and the need to influence public opinion, both on the Israeli and Palestinian side. The meeting ended with a call for a comprehensive campaign by IUSY and its member organizations in the region, to motivate the pragmatic streams in the two societies to take action against the extremists.

The last day of the program began with a commemoration for Yitzhak Rabin, followed by an exchange of opinions with Young Likud and Young Yachad. Eran Mozel, IUSY Vice President hosted the closing session of the delegation together with Sharon Erde, Ran Feingold and Guy Rottenberg. According to delegation members, both sides (Israel and Palestine) concluded their meetings by affirming their commitment to the implementation of the IUSY Action Plan. Furthermore, both sides expressed their support for the continuation of the serious engagement of IUSY in the region.

Eran Mozel is Vice President of IUSY

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Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International
Tel Aviv and Ramallah, 23-24 May 2005

RESOLUTION DEMOCRACY AND PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- The Socialist International, which has long been involved in the efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East, is encouraged by recent developments that give renewed hope that the people of the region can build a peaceful and democratic future. The International remains committed to supporting in every way possible their efforts to achieve peace, ensure respect for human rights, provide economic opportunities for all citizens and strengthen democratic governance based on social democratic values.
- The time has now come to open new perspectives for a Middle East built on peace, democracy and cooperation. This is the best way to halt terrorism. The international community must unite in taking a clear stand against all terrorist activity, violence against innocent people, occupation and oppression.
- The Socialist International supports all the forces in the region that work for democracy, protection of human rights and an end to occupation. It calls on its members and the international community to actively support democratic movements and efforts toward democratic reform in the region on the basis of open civil societies. It is of special importance to protect ethnic minorities in the region and to enhance and guarantee women's rights. We also urge all countries to abolish capital punishment.
- Incentives for peace must be established. We call upon all regions in the world to increase cooperation with the Middle East and are pleased to see that the first summit of South American and Arab countries was held earlier this month.
- In view of the new windows of opportunity following the withdrawal from Gaza and some parts of the northern West Bank, the European Union should play a special role. After the expansion of the EU, bilateral action plans have been offered to Lebanon and Palestine. These action plans must be strengthened and used to improve regional cooperation based on the 1995 Barcelona process. By promoting regional cooperation we believe that peace and prosperity can be guaranteed in the long term. Future cooperation should be enhanced through open markets and borders for trade, capital and labour.
- With the support of European countries and the United States, the countries in the region should consider entering into an agreement for security and cooperation on the model of the OSCE. Through the OSCE, European countries have committed themselves to common values. The organisation has been instrumental in the efforts to win over the divisions between East and West in building the new Europe. The Middle East also needs a common set of values and an agreement that ensures that all people, groups and countries have the right to live in security.

- The Socialist International welcomes Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and some settlements of the West Bank. It must, however, be coordinated with the Palestinian Authority as a part of the Roadmap and followed by negotiations on final status issues. Negotiations must be based on international law, and UN resolutions, and the goal must be the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. We encourage initiatives such as the Peace Coalition Geneva draft, which helped clarify positions and offered opportunities for peace, as envisaged in the third part of the Roadmap.
- The Socialist International underlines the successful steps in the Palestinian electoral process. The SI extends its support to the further strengthening of the reform process in Palestine and supports the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to stop all forms of violence, disarming militia groups, and to include all political parties in the political process, leading to a strengthening of multi-party democracy. The SI calls on the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to include women in the negotiating teams, and to work to protect the rights of women and children during and after conflicts. Young women and men in particular should have a strong role in shaping the future.
- We urge the Israeli government to refrain from activities that would undermine a peaceful outcome. All settlement activities and the building of the wall on Palestinian territory must stop.
- The Socialist International calls upon its member parties and calls upon the international community to extend financial support to the Palestinian Authority and foster concrete cooperation projects that could lead to economic and social development.
- The Socialist International emphasizes the need for building a democratic Iraq that can lead to the restoration of full sovereignty of the Iraqi people. We ask for a stronger role by the UN in the democratising process. We call on all countries to support a democratic Iraq. The future Iraqi constitution must give all peoples in the country equal rights. The rights and the role of women are of special concern. The Kurdish population must have the possibility to exercise their rights within the framework of a united and federal Iraq.
- The Socialist International calls for a solution to the controversy over Iran's nuclear programme. The international community, and especially the United States and the European Union, must harmonise its policies. The Socialist International supports the efforts of democratic forces in the country and denounces the repression against the Kurdish population, calls for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question in Iran.
- The Socialist International welcomes the holding of free, fair and democratic elections in Lebanon, following the large demonstrations by the Lebanese people to assert their sovereignty, independence and democracy, leading to the renewal of the political institutions of the Republic.
- The Socialist International hopes for a decisive reform and democratisation of political life in Syria and calls for the resumption of peace negotiations between Syria and Israel.

Socialist International Women Bureau meeting, Tel Aviv, Israel, 19 - 20 May 2005

RESOLUTION

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING

Socialist International Women is encouraged by the reform process of the Palestinian Authority and by Israel's resolution to withdraw from Gaza and considers this to be a positive step towards reviving the negotiations and reactivating the peace process.

A just and lasting peace must be based on two states for two peoples with two capitals in Jerusalem and a fair solution of the Palestinian refugee issue, while ensuring security for all.

As peace is inextricably linked to equality between men and women, a lasting peace cannot be established without the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in the peace process.

Israeli and Palestinian grassroots women's groups and women's peace movements have been active in lobbying for peace for years, but so far have not been included in any form of negotiation.

Therefore women's concerns, knowledge and experiences were not sufficiently used at the negotiating table when the Road Map for Peace and the Peace Coalition Geneva draft were formalised.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security' which was adopted in October 2000, clearly stresses 'the importance of the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution'.

It is therefore essential that women be included in the analysis, policy making and negotiations since they are more likely than men to be prepared to open and maintain a dialogue seeking to bridge the differences between Israelis and Palestinians.

Therefore, Socialist International Women having listened to women politicians and members of the civil society:

- calls on the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to include women in the negotiating teams, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325;
- stresses the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and children during and after conflicts;
- calls on the parties to renew negotiations based on the 'Road Map for Peace', also considering the 'Peace Coalition Geneva draft' which has been acknowledged by many as a model of agreement;
- calls on its member organisations to join local and international efforts of reconciliation, and contribute towards projects promoting peace and
- supports the establishment of an International Women's Commission for Israeli-Palestinian Peace and encourages the recognition and inclusion of the commission in any future negotiations.