
Meir Pa'il

'Israel: a bridge to the Arab world'

Meir Pa'il is a former Member of the Knesset from the Shelli Party, allied to Labor. He is one of Israel's leading military historians, and is well known for his ground-breaking proposal for a strategic defense of Israel organized from behind the 1967 borders (see EIR, Jan. 31, 1984).

EIR: What do you foresee for the next election campaign? Do you think that Great Projects, like the Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal project, should be brought into the debate, to shape the electorate's choices around concrete proposals instead of personalities?

Pa'il: Of course. And the Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal is an excellent project. I don't mean the one proposed by Yuval Ne'eman, which is a plan for a canal going from Gaza, an occupied zone, to the Dead Sea. The best such proposal came from Schlomo Gur. He was the man who had the "wall and tower" system of building settlements by night. He was the engineer who built the Tel Aviv University. His project was to connect the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, not by tunnel, but by a canal stretching from Haifa to the Yizreel Valley and to the Jordan River, then down the Dead Sea to Eilat. This plan, which was supported by former Prime Minister Yigal Allon, would of course require cooperation with Jordan. That's why Ne'eman proposed doing the canal from Gaza!

EIR: Couldn't this form the content of peace negotiations?

Pa'il: There's more than this project. A colleague of mine who was in the Knesset from the Shelli Party, Arie Eliav, had an idea for a petroleum center in Eilat, which would be the midpoint of a pipeline from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean; alternatively, the pipeline could go straight through without passing Eilat. Then there are possibilities of pipelines from Iraq, through Syria and Jordan to the Mediterranean. This is the kind of thing we need.

EIR: We have heard some talk recently of plans for extending the railway system in Israel.

Pa'il: Sure, why not? Israel needs to develop a railway throughout the country. But the way I see it, such an Israeli railway network would be the hub of a Middle Eastern system as a whole. Jordan has only a north-south railroad line; other Arab states need internal transportation. It should be an integrated system. There used to be a connection from Haifa into Jordan, but one crucial bridge was destroyed during the

1948 war and has never been revitalized. That should be done. Then, there are irrigation systems, including the possibility of using fresh water from a second Nile River, if the Egyptian government builds it. In the war, the British had a railway and pipeline that they built up as they moved, all the way to Khan Yunis. But there it stopped. Now the Egyptians are building an aqueduct from the eastern Nile Delta to the Sinai.

EIR: You know that Mr. LaRouche's idea for development in this area is based on the nuplex concept, of agro-industrial urban complexes built up around nuclear plants. What do you think of this idea?

Pa'il: Nuclear power plants in the Sinai? Ah, I know there are some dreamers who are thinking along these lines. You see, the crux of the question is this: Many Arabs and many Israelis think of this country as a barrier to the Arab world. They see Israel as a block which is dividing the Arab nations from one another. I think that we can transform this barrier into a bridge, if we can get Israel to build these railways, canals, and nuclear plants in cooperation with our Arab neighbors.

EIR: What do you think would happen if Yassir Arafat were to do what Lyndon LaRouche has proposed, that is, declare a government in exile? And what if he were to say that this government's policies were the kinds of Great Projects that we've just mapped out?

Pa'il: If Arafat had the guts to do it, then in Israel, the 10-15% of the population which is already for it, would grow to 35% immediately. They would be people who would go for ending the occupation of the territories.

Yitzhak Moda'i

'Economy, strategy key to elections'

Yitzhak Moda'i, current Israeli minister of energy, is leading the candidate list of the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party will run in alliance with the Likud in the upcoming election, but has retained the option of leaving that coalition after the election. This means that in the event of a Labor Party victory, the Liberal Party would theoretically be in a position to join its government coalition.

EIR: Mr. Moda'i, what do you think will be the major issues in this campaign?

Moda'i: To outline them briefly, though not necessarily in