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## Meir Pa'il

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# '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.

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## Yitzhak Moda'i

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# '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

order of priority, which will be decided by the parties, they are the economic situation and strategic issues. As far as the economy is concerned, they are inflation, the balance of payments crisis, the financial markets (including government issues, bonds, the stock exchange), restructuring the economy, and labor relations. The main question is how to divide the national cake among the various sectors of the population. Over the past few years, the cry in Israel has been "economic independence." The question raised was, can Israel shoulder its national expenditures, maintain its debt repayments, and keep up a rather advanced welfare state, without outside support. This has been a big slogan in previous elections and will be one this time as well. I personally don't think it is possible, given the security situation of the area, but it is a goal to be sought and achieved.

**EIR:** What is your view of the "post-industrial society," which is being promoted at a Jerusalem conference this week?

**Moda'i:** If you are talking about robotics, then it is clear that the Japanese can produce them better than even the Americans. But in the field of energy and biogenetics, we certainly can compete effectively.

**EIR:** What about the Great Projects approach?

**Moda'i:** Yes, we have a number of such Great Projects underway or under consideration. One is in the military sphere, the Lavie Jet program. Another is the Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal project, and the third is the railway extension to Eilat.

**EIR:** Do you think such projects, especially the latter two, could become the content of cooperative agreements with neighboring states?

**Moda'i:** Our relations with neighboring states are a political issue, and I don't know how practical such an approach would be right now.

**EIR:** What about strategic questions?

**Moda'i:** The peace treaty with Egypt is definitely the center, and I don't think it is at all threatened. Now we have to deal with the question of Camp David for the entire Middle East. Issues which will come up in the campaign are the Lebanese situation (both political and military), the Palestinian issue, relations with Transjordan, and relations Israel has developed with some countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. In some areas, our relations are well-established, for example, vis-à-vis Europe, where our relation to the EEC [European Community] is an established line of Israeli foreign policy. Above all, we have good relations with the United States. The United States has good relations with many countries around the world, both democratic and not. Israeli-American relations are unique because they involve military, political, and financial support, as well as economic cooperation—I'm

referring to the discussions of free trade relations with the United States. Another issue for the elections will be the religious status quo, and the ways of assimilating waves of immigration into Israel.

**EIR:** What do you think will happen in the elections?

**Moda'i:** I am no prophet, but I can tell you what I wish would happen. Provided we overcome certain momentary obstacles, the same political power will form the next government. The Likud government has had some failures, but also successes. The political term is very short for accomplishing all one's goals, but we have introduced new policies in the last six to seven years. Some of them ran into high waves, and need to be directed onto the right course. Some were influenced by external developments, like the Lebanese situation, which had more to do with a Palestinian state than with Lebanon. I say that because it was not just an army that was there, it was a Palestinian state within a state.

**EIR:** Do you think there is any substance to the rumors of a possible "grand coalition" government, including both Likud and Labor after the elections?

**Moda'i:** Before the elections were called, we were very close to such a coalition, with the consent of two of the parties involved. This does not mean that such a coalition precluded toppling the government—which is, in fact, what happened. Now, if the elections yield a big majority vote for one party, there will be no coalition. If the vote is proportionate to what it was in the last elections, then there are good chances for a grand coalition.

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**Yitzhak Artzi**

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## 'Israel needs its own constitution'

*Yitzhak Artzi is the lead candidate for the Independent Liberal Party, and is currently deputy mayor of Tel Aviv. The ILP is a split-off from the Progressive Party, whose other faction joined with the Liberal Party in 1965. After years of relatively small representation in the Knesset, the ILP decided to join with the Labor Party and the Mapam in the Alignment.*

**EIR:** Can you tell us what you think are the most important issues in this election, and what you are proposing.

**Artzi:** I think it is important to distinguish between things which are common between us and the Labor Party—and