

CHALLENGE

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letters to the editor

The leaders of public opinion in Germany are still trying to make the Germans believe that the Declaration of Principles (DOP), the so-called Gaza and Jericho Agreement, will lead to peace in the Middle East. I disagree with this optimistic outlook. The DOP is a disaster for the Palestinian people. It is also the greatest diplomatic success for Israel since its establishment in 1948 – Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres did not even have to admit that they are an occupying power. They received everything they wanted from Arafat's PLO and gave nothing in return, except agreeing to talk with "the organization."

The DOP is the result of the New World Order – the strongest actor gets his way. With his Settling Accounts operation against the Hizballah in Southern Lebanon during the secret Oslo negotiations, Rabin demonstrated that Israel can expel half a million people from their land with the silent agreement of the international public. Arafat got the message: either he accepts Israel's conditions or he will lapse into insignificance. The handshake in Washington symbolized the abandonment of the struggle for Palestinian sovereignty.

The DOP dealt Arafat and the PLO a death blow. Among the initial purposes of the PLO at its founding were the return of the refugees from 1948 and the right to self-determination. These aims do not appear anywhere in the DOP. In his letter of assurance to Prime Minister Rabin, Arafat professed that the justified

resistance of the Palestinian people was only "terror and violence," tragically giving a slap in the face to all those who have died in the struggle. He further pledged to fight any kind of violations of the DOP.

The signing of the DOP means that the PLO recognizes the 100-year-old Zionist claim to Eretz Israel, and the concomitant destruction of the society that was there. The PLO representatives legitimized the occupation and opened the Israeli door to Arab markets. The question of Jerusalem, the return of the refugees of 1948 and 1967, the settlements, illegal expropriation of land, the destruction of houses, etc., were all excluded from the DOP. The oppressed legitimized the oppressor! Because Arafat has already given everything away, he will have no leverage when it comes to the basics. He will be dependent on Israel's whimsy and goodwill, and is captive to Israel and the DOP. He must accept every Israeli condition, and while Israel may sometimes be a little generous, it does not have to be. Rabin already has Arafat on his knees, but will make him kiss his feet.

That the Arafat-PLO is now obliged to fight its own people, in collaboration with the Israeli security services, is a shame. The hunt, the continuing human rights violations, the increased killings by the IDF and the death-squads in Gaza take place with the silent approval of the Fatah faction. Since under Arafat the PLO no longer exists, he should resign and make way for a new Palestinian per-

sonality who is honest and steadfast, such as Haidar Abdel Shafi.

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