Obituary

During the night of 19. to 20. August our friend Uri Avnery, laureate of the international ethecon Blue Planet Award 2009, passed away at the age of 94 years.

Since 1948 Uri dedicated himself tirelessly for peace between Israel and Palestine. Until the last moment he wrote critical comments in his weekly column, pointing out possibilities of action in the increasingly deadlocked Middle East conflict.

Having escaped to Palestine from Nazi Germany as a child with his parents, he took a bold stand against any form of oppression from then on. As a young man he turned his back on the nationalist Irgun militia, defending in both words and deeds the idea of peace between Israel and Palestine and the coexistence of two states with Jerusalem as the common capital.

For 40 years from 1950 he challenged the ruling powers with his weekly newspaper Haolam Hazeh, whose editorial offices and printing plant were constant targets for bombs and arson attacks. Even as a parliamentarian he remained faithful to his ideals. From 1965 to 1973 and again from 1979 to 1981 he boldly faced the rest of Knesset as a one man party group.

It caused a worldwide stir when in the middle of the 1982 Lebanon war Uri crossed the frontline to meet Yassir Arafat as the first Israeli ever. With his PLO contacts he always took risks and repeatedly survived attacks on his life. 2004 he consciously acted as a human shield in order to prevent the imminent asassination of Arafat.

In 1992 he founded the world-famous peace organization Gush Shalom along with some friends and broke the blockade of the Gaza strip with an aid convoy. With his multitude of books and writings Uri Avnery had permanent and significant influence on the public debate in Israel. His texts have been translated into many languages.

For his courageous and vigourous commitment for peace and human rights Uri Avneri was awarded numerous prizes. Ethecon, Foundation Ethics & Economy, honoured him with the international Blue Planet Award 2009.

Uri's hope to live to see peace between Israel and Palestine has not been fulfilled. Ethecon will keep his memory alive and keep on fighting for his vision.

His ashes will be ceremonially buried today, 22th August 2018, in Beit Sokolov (Journalists' Association House) at 4 Kaplan St., Tel Aviv.

Berlin, 22th August 2018

ethecon Foundation Ethics & Economy

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