

ISRAEL

Begin's drive toward war... and an Israeli garrison state

by Mark Burdman

Since the July 31 approval by an overwhelming majority of Israel's Knesset of the "basic law" defining Jerusalem as Israel's "complete and united" capital, apprehension has grown throughout the international community that the regime of Prime Minister Menachem Begin is defiantly leading Israel toward war.

This apprehension grew when acting Defense Minister Begin launched Israel on a series of massive "preventive raids" against Palestinian encampments in Lebanon Aug. 19, and when aides of Begin began to speak openly of a wider regional conflict possibly involving Syria, Iraq, and the Arab Gulf states.

Leading world financial centers and governments began to envision an imminent conflagration in the Middle East, leading to a new oil cutoff, a bottomless financial crisis, and a new world war.

What has confirmed the worst fears of professional Middle East observers, however, is neither Israel's Jerusalem vote nor its Lebanon adventures, taken singly or in combination. To these observers, what is most dismaying is the evidence that the Israeli state itself has been transformed by the Begin regime into an odd mimicry of the fascist states of the 1930s: a state irresistibly committed to foreign expansionism, without the moral or social moorings to view strategic situations with any sense of reality apart from ideological fanaticism.

Begin himself, these observers fear, has become strategically insane.

Perversion of justice

Perhaps the best barometer of how the transformation inside Israel has taken shape is the emergent orientation of the state justice apparatus.

Earlier this summer, Zionist leader Nahum Goldmann, in an article in West Germany's weekly, *Die Zeit*, identified the Israeli justice apparatus as one of the few rational institutions in the country. This is no longer the case. The judicial system is beginning to go through the same process undergone by the German courts in the early phases of the Hitler regime.

This factor may well explain the sudden departure

of Justice Minister Shmuel Tamir from his post earlier this month.

In the early Hitler period, the courts in Germany began to issue arbitrary decrees against the Nazis' political enemies and to let Nazi members and collaborators go scot free. On Aug. 19 of this year, the Israeli Supreme Court, by a 2-1 vote, denied the petition for re-entry into Israel of two Palestinian Arab mayors and one religious judge who had been deported without due process of law. A day earlier, a top military court had given a sentence of only 19 months to two Israeli soldiers who had been found guilty of stealing army stocks of TNT, grenades, and ammunition. The defendants had admitted during their trial that they had planned to use these weapons to commit terrorist actions against Islamic mosques and West Bank Arab institutions. Formally, the crime was so serious that legal experts in Jerusalem had expected a sentence of 20 to 30 years.

The strategic message of these back-to-back cases was clear: terrorism against the Arabs of the West Bank will be sanctioned by the authorities, while Arab protest of Israeli policies will be summarily suppressed.

This flowed from two hardly noticed but remarkable laws that were passed in the same pre-adjudgment Knesset session that voted up the Jerusalem annexation bill. One of these laws, the Citizenship Law, gives the Interior Minister the right to revoke an individual citizenship for an act involving "a violation of allegiance to the State of Israel," a definition so broad that virtually any criticism of state policy could come under its rubric. The second law, the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, according to the July 31 *Jerusalem Post*, forbids "the performance of any act in a public place which demonstrates identification with or sympathy for a terrorist organization, such as flying a flag, displaying a symbol, uttering an anthem or slogan."

A week after the passage of these laws came revelations by *Washington Star* correspondent David Halevy: Begin had so obstructed an investigation into Zionist-fundamentalist responsibility for West Bank anti-Arab

terrorism that he had forced the resignation of the head of Israel's Shin Beth internal security service, Avraham Achuv. Begin's response to the Halevy story was to mobilize his loyal Herut Party machine to condemn Halevy as Israel's "Tokyo Rose" and to liken the *Star* article to the medieval "blood libel" accusations that Jews were drinking the blood of Christian babies.

But by Aug. 24, the *Jerusalem Post* was constrained to condemn Begin's attitude toward West Bank anti-terrorist investigations as verging on "condoning vigilante actions by Gush Emunim and other radical groups of their ilk." Anti-Begin sources in Israel fear that this is a serious understatement of the case. These sources estimate that the deterioration of the justice process presages a move by Begin to organize the large-scale deportation of Arabs out of the West Bank, possibly under conditions of a new war. "What has been done vis-à-vis the West Bank Arabs over the past few weeks is only the beginning," an Israeli source commented. "Begin and his people would love a pretext to deport them all and annex the whole area."

The 'Kosher Nostra' factor

This juridical transformation coincides with the ascendancy of the Israeli mafia, or, as the Israeli press calls it, the "Kosher Nostra." This Kosher Nostra is one vital arm of the international crime-and-assassination octopus known as Permindex, the agency controlled by leading elements of the European "black nobility" that was behind the assassination of John F. Kennedy and many attempts against Charles de Gaulle.

The national ascendancy of the Kosher Nostra/Permindex mob is creating a situation in which Israel is less than ever a state able to act on the basis of rational self-interest but is compelled to be an "enforcer" for powerful international oligarchic families.

The interplay between political terrorism and crime is best exemplified in the recent Meir Kahane affair.

Immediately before the Halevy story broke, Begin had arranged for one of the charges against the currently detained Jewish Defense League leader to be dropped. During the same week of Aug. 4, Kahane wrote an article appearing in the *New York Jewish Press* insisting that Jewish mobster and dope-pusher Meyer Lansky be granted an entry visa into Israel! The *Jewish Press* has as its attorney Roy Cohn, the New York mobster-lawyer who formed the original Lionel Corporation holding company that bankrolled Permindex in the late 1950s.

Kahane's message on Lansky somehow found its way to the top level of the Israeli justice apparatus. On Aug. 5, Lansky obtained a show-cause order from the High Court of Justice in Israel demanding that the Interior Ministry give reasons for not allowing him into the country—despite the fact that crime-investigation

subcommittees in the Knesset have been warning that Lansky's entry into Israel would lead to a consolidation of crime operations to a new and unmanageable level.

Even without Lansky, the crime problem is rapidly becoming unmanageable. Hashish imports into Israel have nearly doubled over the past two years, and the Israeli population has been rocked by an unprecedented wave of drug trade-related underworld slayings. In respect to both problems, Israeli police officials have asserted that "the acute personnel shortage" in the police ministry has rendered law enforcement impossible. What they have neglected to point out is that this is part of a conscious national policy to open the door for criminal operations, since the Israeli political establishment is extensively intertwined with the crime kingpins, a reality that is documented in the recently released book, *The Israeli Connection*, by French journalist Jacques Derogy.

In one of his chapters, Derogy shows how crime operations interface land-annexation strategy. In many cases land-purchase transactions carried out by the Jewish National Fund on the West Bank are carried out through the mediation of Israeli mafia elements, who threaten and swindle West Bank Arabs into relinquishing land titles.

Similar phenomena are reportedly occurring both in Lebanon and in Egypt.

According to a highly informed Lebanese source, "Israel has recently come into possession of extensive real estate titles in southern Lebanon, to the point that annexation would hardly have to be announced. This has been done through financial deals between Israeli groups and the same Lebanese Sursok family that sold the original land titles to the Zionists in the late 19th century which expedited the creation of the state of Israel in the first place. In this present episode, Israeli criminals have won control over the hashish cultivation and transport contract in southern Lebanon, and this has been a crucial factor in consolidating Israeli control in the southern Lebanese region."

In Egypt, the Israeli Mossad is in part operating through the Kosher Nostra to consolidate ties with the old Egyptian families who are linked to the Sursoks and other top scions of the Mediterranean "black nobility." According to the same source, this Israeli mafia-Egyptian tie "works through real estate, drugs, and other channels. It is giving the Mossad an important capability for operations inside Egypt. In the long-term view of Begin and his friends, this capability may some day translate into new spheres of influence for their 'Greater Israel' design."

Whether or not similar operations are going on in the Golan Heights region, which Israel is seeking to annex with a new Jerusalem "basic law"-type arrangement, is at this point unknown.

Scenarios for war and new alliances

Several factional tendencies are arising in Israel, not all agreed on the limits to which Israel should go in this current period. We present below two reflections of the thinking of Israeli military and intelligence circles that have appeared recently in the European press.

The first appeared in France's *Le Matin* Aug. 20. Correspondent Shalom Cohen claims that Israel's real aim in Lebanon is to seek a pretext for knocking out the Iraqi nuclear program. In the eventuality of a new war that Israel could provoke between Syrians and Lebanese Christians, Israel could intervene, provoking Iraq to intervene, providing Israel pretext to strike against nuclear installations inside Iraq—the goal of provoking war to begin with. Excerpts follow:

... "In reality," explains a diplomat, "the great preoccupation of Israel is not, for the years to come, the forces of the Palestinians in South Lebanon. It is Iraq which is in the process of becoming a nuclear power."

"We will respond, I can assure you," it was affirmed recently in respect to Iraqi nuclear development by the Minister of Transport Chaim Landau, old comrade-in-arms of Menachem Begin in the underground; a phrase which could be understood to mean that Israel is seeking a direct confrontation with Iraq. But the two countries don't have a common frontier. Israeli and Iraqi soldiers have only confronted each other during the Israeli-Arab wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973, when Iraq had run to the aid of the countries which separate it from Israel: Syria and Jordan.

To have a *casus belli*, it would therefore be necessary for Iraq to be pushed, once again, to intervene in an Israeli-Arab conflict. The place already chosen to ignite the flame which could start a war is Lebanon, where the Syrian army finds itself continually bogged down.

Should Israel intervene in the combat between the Syrian army and the Lebanese Christian forces, and the whole "eastern front" go up in flames, provoking Iraqi armored divisions to enter into action, Israel could then counter attack; not only against the Iraqi

expeditionary corps, but against the site of the nuclear installations, in the interior of Iraq itself. Israel would not have to concern itself overmuch with the reactions of the Americans while the electoral campaign is in progress. . . .

An alternative viewpoint of emergent Israeli strategy was laid out by West Germany's Frankfurter Rundschau, in an Aug. 14 piece based on the investigative reporting of West German author Erich Follath. The Rundschau claims that a "new strategy of the Israeli secret services" has emerged, propelled by younger officers in the Mossad foreign intelligence service who "don't have the ideological blinkers of the old ones." What follows is the six theses that this Mossad grouping reportedly worked out on June 29 of this year as the basis for a comprehensive new strategy document for the Mossad:

... Conclusion and thesis I: We must finally . . . accept Egypt as a friendly state. We must strengthen cooperation [by Egypt] with the Israeli secret services on all levels. . . .

Conclusion and thesis II: The PLO has not and will not change. It should remain as the central target of the Mossad. The subversion of the PLO by Mossad agents must be strengthened; the PLO must be discredited with the strong Islamic states. . . .

Conclusion and thesis III: We must consider not Iraq, but Syria, as Israel's most dangerous enemy. The Mossad must strengthen its secret intelligence work in Damascus, to be prepared for an eventual attack. We should consider whether an alternative to Assad can be built up whom we could eventually support with troops. The Mossad should also consider, with the assistance of friendly services, support for the independence movements of the Kurds and the Arabs in Khomeini's Iran, and ensure so much unrest in the border areas between Iraq and Iran that the Iraqis are tied down there. . . .

Conclusion and thesis IV: We must succeed in talks with Peking and intensify our contacts with Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Oman—the only way to get out of international isolation.

Conclusion and thesis V: No unnecessary provocation of the Americans, and intensifying of contacts with the French and the Germans, are desirable. . . .

Conclusion and thesis VI: In this special situation after the events on the West Bank, the internal spy organization must also be used against Jewish citizens—otherwise Israel discredits itself internationally.