

# Who's bankrolling Gaza-Jericho foes?

by Dean Andromidas

The implementation of the Gaza-Jericho peace accord signed last September between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization, has been stalled for months, supposedly because of questions dealing with border security and the exact size of Jericho and security of Jewish settlements. Observers are also quick to cite strong opposition within the region in both Israel and among the 10 Palestinian groups opposed to the accord. Others cite the dark hands of Syria and Iran. But the most important opposition is not from the region. While much of this opposition is quite real, one should also look at the vast financial transfers from anti-accord circles in the United States to Israeli opposition circles.

On the surface this involves a network of Jewish groups traditionally linked to support for establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. But these groups, through their links to such organizations as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), in effect function as the cat's paw of more serious opposition among powerful Anglo-American policy circles as represented by Kissinger Associates. The *Jerusalem Post*, which has become a mouthpiece of the opposition in Israel, is owned by the Canada-based Hollinger Corp. of Conrad Black, whose international advisory board includes Henry Kissinger, Lord Rothschild, Margaret Thatcher, Richard Perle, Lord Carrington (also of Kissinger Associates), and Paul Volcker, among others. The *Post's* vitriolic opposition to the accord has prompted the Israeli Foreign Ministry to cancel 1,000 of its nearly 1,200 subscriptions, despite the fact that they receive them free of charge. Hollinger's mother firm, the Argus Corp., had been established by a half-dozen officials of the British Special Operations Executive economic warfare department after World War II.

These circles have tapped their loyal agent in Israel, Gen. Ariel Sharon (ret.), former housing minister in the Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir. Sharon has made himself the central spokesman, fundraiser, and leader of movement against the Gaza-Jericho accord. This primarily involves the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, the more militant This Is Our Land Movement, Gush Emunim, and various proto-terrorist groups associated with the Kach Party of the late Meir Kahane.

The Kach Party has been the object of Israeli police investigations that have led to arrests of several of its members for gun-running from the United States and for attacks on Palestinians and Palestinian targets. The Kach has also called for the formation of an independent state of Judea if the government attempts to uproot settlements in the territories. In the first week of February, the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza along with the Joint Committee, representing anti-accord activists within the Green Line, launched a \$500,000 campaign to derail the accord.

It must be said that although the euphoria of the early days of the accord has substantially dissipated, a broad-based opposition in Israel itself has yet to materialize. Most political unease is a result of continuing violence and murders of Israeli citizens. As one senior Israeli source told *EIR*, "In Israel, there are, of course, a few of these fanatical settler movements, and, of course, there is a strong public feeling each time someone is found murdered. But, by and large, the public sentiment is that there is going to be a deal, and that is a good thing."

While the settlers' movement has been leading an extremely active, vocal, and sometimes not so non-violent campaign, it represents a small minority in the population. Of the 5 million Israelis, only a little over 100,000 live in the West Bank and Gaza. Meanwhile, the established opposition parties appear to be in disarray. The formerly ruling Likud is deeply factionalized among a half-dozen figures vying for leadership, seemingly more concerned about the 1996 elections than about destroying the accord. The right-wing Tsomet and Moledet parties have both split, prompting the *Jerusalem Post* to lament that this "betrays not only political irresponsibility but a death wish which may be fulfilled."

More importantly, the settlers' movement has no financial resources of its own and is totally dependent on foreign resources, not only for political activities but also the very physical existence of the settlements. As for the political parties, the last elections have left them deeply in debt. Led by Ariel Sharon, the opposition has made steady pilgrimages to the United States where their coffers have been amply filled. As one Israeli insider told *EIR*, "The whole opposition movement to the peace deal with the Palestinians is in the United States rather than Israel."

In March, Ariel Sharon is expected to embark on yet another tour of North America, his third or fourth since the signing of the agreement last September. Sharon is said to work out of the headquarters of the Heartland Campaign at East 45th Street in New York City. His fundraising tours have taken him to Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Houston, and Toronto. Among the leading groups that have come forward in support are Americans for a Safe Israel, the World Committee for Israel, and Pro Israel.

Another key group is the Brooklyn, New York-based



*Yasser Arafat surrounded by German government officials, in a visit to Bonn in July 1993, shortly before the Jericho-Gaza accords were announced that September. Inset: Ariel Sharon in New York City, 1982.*

Hasidic Lubavitcher sect which runs the Habad Movement in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Unlike other Hasidic sects that are anti-Zionist and stand in opposition to the state of Israel for religious reasons, the Lubavitchers are not only staunch supporters of the Israeli state, but are also militantly committed to the settlers' movement. Unlike other Hasidim, they are vigorous proselytizers and fundraisers among Jews throughout the world. Their Rebe, Rabbi Schneerson, who they also believe to be the true Messiah, was close friends with the late Menachem Begin and also with Ariel Sharon.

Support is also coming from Christian fundamentalist circles. TV evangelists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson are both expected to meet Sharon and leaders of the settlers' movement. The movement is also getting support from the Christians for Israel; the Christian Coalition for Israel, led by Dick Hellman; and the Christian Political Action Committee.

The real danger posed by this type of outside support is not so much the financing of a few noisy demonstrations in Israel. Israel, more than any other country, is extremely dependent on outside financial support. In addition to \$3 billion a year it receives in economic and military handouts from the United States, as well as the \$10 billion in loan guarantees, it receives as much as \$2 billion from various American-based organizations such as the United Jewish Appeal and the Zionist Organization of America.

The latter is the American chapter of the World Zionist

Organization based in Israel, which is a key financial backer of economic and social projects throughout Israel, particularly dealing with the massive immigration from the former Soviet Union. While the so-called Jewish lobby has been the most effective in mobilizing support for Israel, it can, by the same methods, destabilize the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. In elections held last December, the entire leadership of the World Zionist Organization changed hands, bringing to power Morton Klein, former head of the ZOA Philadelphia chapter and an outspoken opponent of the Gaza-Jericho accord as national chairman. His slate of 10 candidates also won. These circles have been key in working behind the scenes in Washington to force out Clinton appointees who support the Gaza-Jericho accords.

The role of Ariel Sharon cannot be underestimated. As a retired general and former defense minister, Sharon enjoys influence among active military officers as well as the security and intelligence establishment. Sharon's influence could explain reports of growing doubts about the peace process among military and intelligence circles. Sharon is also said to be using the settlers' movement both as a battering ram against the accord and as a political machine in order to contest the next Israeli elections. Scheduled for 1996, these elections will see for the first time a popularly elected prime minister. Sharon has already announced that he will be running.