

Jewish Terror Plot In East Jerusalem

by Dean Andromidas

In the early hours of April 29, Israeli police and the Shin Bet security service arrested four Israeli settlers for planning attacks on Arabs, including an attempt to bomb an Arab hospital and girls' school in East Jerusalem. Had it been successful, the massacre would have been the most serious Israeli terrorist attack since Baruch Goldstein killed at least 29 Muslim worshippers in Hebron in 1994, and worse than any by Palestinian groups. This radical Jewish terrorist movement aims not only at Palestinians and Arabs, but Israeli peace activists as well.

Police arrested Shlomo Davir and Yarden Morag, militants from the Bat Ayin settlement, after they were seen unhooking a trailer from their car and positioning it in front of al-Mukasa Hospital, across the street from an Arab girls school. The officers found weapons in the car and a powerful explosive device in the trailer timed to go off the next day, April 30. Subsequently, two others were taken into custody: Ofer Gamliel, also from Bat Ayin; and Yossi Ben-Baruch, from the Havat Ma'on settlement. Two weeks later the Israeli police arrested Noam Federman, leader of the Kach movement, founded by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, which has been outlawed in both Israel and the United States as a terrorist organization. A sixth suspect arrested was Menashe Levinger, son of Rabbi Moshe Levinger of Kiryat Arba settlement outside of Hebron. Rabbi Levinger was the spiritual guide of

Baruch Goldstein and one of the most radical rabbis of the settler movement.

On May 14, Dvir and Morag confessed to the plot to place a powerful bomb between the hospital and the school. This attack is believed related to several unsolved West Bank attacks that have killed Palestinians, including women and children. One involved a pipe bomb in the courtyard of an elementary boys school, also in East Jerusalem.

Israeli peace camp leaders are also targeted. Prior to a huge peace rally held in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square on May 11, one of the participants—the popular singer and peace activist Yaffa Yarkoni—received a death threat from a group called Gilad Shalhevet, which had claimed responsibility for attacks on Palestinians in the past.

The Jewish 'Infrastructure of Terrorism'

A closer look at this case offers a glimpse into an "infrastructure of terror" of Jewish extremism, every bit as fanatical as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon accuses the Palestinians of being. Following the line linking these suspects to that infrastructure, one is brought directly amidst those who murdered Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995. These terrorists represent the second and third generation of the Israeli extremist movement starting with Vladimir Jabotinsky, the founder of Israeli fascism. Although Jabotinsky was a secularist, many of these modern counterparts have embraced a form of messianic Judaism rejected by mainstream Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews. In fact, it represents the "Jewish" counterpart to that "Christian fundamentalism" with which it intimately cooperates.

Start with the two suspects who have confessed, Shlomo Dvir and Yarden Morag. Their home, Bat Ayin, is part of the Gush Etzion bloc of Israeli settlements in the occupied territory south of Bethlehem. Described in the Gush Etzion web page as "ultra-Orthodox-Zionistic," the village of 60 families was founded by the radical settlers movement of Gush Emunim, the movement which built the first settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip right after the June 1967 "Six-Day War." Ariel Sharon was directly involved in these early projects.

Both suspects were members of yeshivas, religious schools, linked to extremist currents. The third, Ofer Gamliel, came from the same settlement; the fourth, Yosef Ben-Baruch, from Havat Ma'on, near Hebron, is linked to Kiryat Arba, where Brooklyn-born Baruch Goldstein made his home, and one of the most radical settlements in all the occupied territories. In 1999 Havat Ma'on gained international attention when Prime Minister Ehud Barak ordered the evacuation of its 100 settlers because it was illegal. Barak was



The "New Kach Movement" exalts Baruch Goldstein, the terrorist who murdered 29 Muslims worshipping at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron in 1994. Followers of Kach and messianic settler rabbis have been arrested in Jerusalem in recent months trying to duplicate Goldstein's massacre.

stopped by a mobilization of the powerful settlers lobby.

The last two suspects, Noam Federman and Menashe Levinger, are among the most notorious extremists in Israel. Federman, who has been arrested countless times, joined the Kach movement when he was 14, becoming a protégé of Rabbi Meir Kahane, who founded the Jewish Defense League in Brooklyn, in the 1960s. But Kahane did not introduce Federman to terrorism. Noam's father, David Federman, raised his son on tales from the days before Israel's 1948 statehood, when the elder Federman was a member of the terrorist Stern Gang. In those days of the British Mandate, Federman was arrested by the British authorities and exiled to Eritrea, in Africa. He shared a prison cell with Yitzhak Shamir, also a leader of the Stern Gang, later Likud Prime Minister.

In his early career in Kach, the younger Federman attacked Israeli Jews as often as Palestinians. In the 1980s, he assaulted Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, and leaders of Peace Now. Most notably, among his many arrests, was one in which he was linked to Yigal Amir, Rabin's assassin. Nonetheless, Federman admits to having been, at one time, an informant for the Shin Bet internal security services.

Messianic Murderers

It is the pedigree of Menashe Levinger, the sixth suspect, that brings this investigation to the epicenter of the terrorist infrastructure that leads directly to the Sharon government. Menashe is the son of Rabbi Moshe Levinger, founder of the radical Gush Emunim settlers' movement as well as the radical Jewish settlement in the center of Palestinian Hebron. The 70-year-old rabbi was convicted of manslaughter in the 1980s, for killing a Palestinian passerby, when he fired his sub-machine gun into the Hebron marketplace in reaction to Palestinian youths throwing stones at his car.

Levinger is among the group of rabbis who preach a form of messianism which shaped the demented minds of two generations of Jewish extremists, including Rabin's murderer, Yigal Amir, and mass murderer Baruch Goldstein. Amir spent much time at Kiryat Arba settlement, where he became well acquainted with Levinger and members of Kach, including Noam Federman. All six suspects in this latest case subscribe to these teachings.

One of Noam Levinger's colleagues is Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzburg, who became notorious for teaching that "Jewish blood and Gentile blood are not the same." He praised Baruch Goldstein as a righteous man, after the latter's slaughter of Muslim worshippers. Also in this circle of rabbis is Noam Livnat, who runs the yeshiva in the Palestinian city of Nablus (known as the Biblical city of Shechem in Hebrew). The yeshiva, called Od Yosef Chai (Joseph still lives), is located at the alleged burial place of Joseph, but in reality it is the grave of a Muslim sheikh.

Also the son of a member of the old Stern Gang, Livnat is the brother of Limor Livnat, Education Minister in Sharon's government. Limor Livnat joined Sharon in Washington ear-

lier this month, where she presented White House staffers "documented" evidence of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's alleged ties to terrorism. She did not mention her own connections to Jewish terrorism.

So extreme are the teachings of Noam Livnat, that in 1996, Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, who is himself a religious settler, warned the Yesha Council organization of settlers, "There's a potential for murder in the yeshiva in Shechem. Do not accord it your protection." His warnings have not been heeded.

Yigal Amir also named Noam Livnat as one of those who showed him the lighted path to the assassination of Rabin. In 1995, Rabin ordered the evacuation of the yeshiva but was stymied by the settlers lobby. A few weeks later he was assassinated by Yigal Amir. In 1996, when Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu was Prime Minister, the Israeli Defense Forces again attempted to evacuate the yeshiva, particularly after the death of several soldiers during riots that year. But Education Minister Limor Livnat made sure that it remained open.

Miami Bingo and Jerusalem Terror

Another rabbi in this group is Benny Elon, who earlier this month was voted leader of the Moledet party, whose official platform calls for the "transfer" of the Palestinian population to the "Palestinian state" of Jordan. Elon was Tourism Minister in Sharon's government, after the leader of the party, Rehavam Ze'evi was assassinated last October. Although Moledet has subsequently left the Sharon government, Elon, who is close to Sharon, is reportedly preparing to reenter the government. In a new election, Elon claims his party would get 20% of the vote.

Elon is an expert on the works of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the spiritual founder of Gush Emunim, and prior to entering politics, he taught for five years at the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva. This is the main center for the fanatics who want to destroy the Islamic holy sites on al-Haram al-Sharif, and build the Third Temple of Solomon, a project that would inflame the entire Islamic world and lead to a third world war. In 1990, he left Ateret Cohanim in order to found a new yeshiva on Mt. Scopus called Beit Orot. This project was financed by the notorious Irving Moscowitz, the Miami-based bingo parlor king. Moscowitz is a leading funder of both Netanyahu and Sharon.

Elon also shares an interesting connection to Rabin's murderer. His niece, Margalit Har Shefi, in 1998 was convicted of "not preventing a crime"—knowing that Amir was planning to kill Rabin and not informing the authorities.

This latest bomb plot and this "infrastructure of terror" has yet to be brought to the attention of the Bush Administration's international war on terror. But much of this infrastructure is financed and supported from the United States, particularly by Christian fundamentalist organizations, whose members are now being courted for the votes in the upcoming Congressional elections.