

The rise of fascism in Israel

The new Middle East threat is analyzed by Mark Burdman, with a view to the growing power of Nazi-imitators in the Jewish state

The general-secretary of Israel's opposition Mapam Party, Victor Shemtov, issued a public warning earlier this month that "the conditions are ripe for the rise of fascism in Israel." Shemtov identified these conditions: "religious fanaticism and chauvinism," inflation rates of almost 150 percent, and rapidly rising rates of unemployment.

Shemtov is not alone in Israel in expressing this sentiment. As the economic crisis in Israel worsens and as the shaky governing coalition led by Menachem Begin retreats into increasingly fanatical and unyielding positions, the fear has grown among Israeli political moderates and social analysts that the country is entering a potentially irreversible transformation to fascism.

Since fascism necessarily dictates foreign looting adventures, the situation in Israel holds the gravest dangers for the entire Middle East region.

Sources contacted by *EIR* warned this week that it is "more than likely" that the Middle East will witness a new war and oil embargo in the short-to-medium term future.

Similarly, Antonio Gambino, a correspondent for Italy's *L'Espresso* magazine who is a member of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London, warns in his weekly column that Israel is poised for a new war in which it plans to deploy its atomic weapons arsenal.

Shemtov's warning and Gambino's report are made more credible by a June 18 statement by Yuval Neeman, the father of Israel's atomic bomb and super-computerized intelligence system and a head of the Zionist-fundamentalist Renaissance Party. Israel's "survival," Neeman insisted, depends on "transforming itself into a military fortress" that can "confront Soviet global power." Neeman had just organized a team of influential retired generals, all with ties into Israel's military-intelligence and high-technology military-related industry apparatus, to sign a statement demanding that Israel refuse *any* future territorial concessions to the Arab states (see box).

The *immediate* danger in the Israeli situation is that Begin, heading a very slim majority coalition and showing the lowest-ever rating in various opinion polls, is

relying on the most extreme Zionist zealots, such as the Gush Emunim annexationist cult, as his base of power.

In the words of one well-informed American Zionist source, "Begin is getting support from the Gush, and vice versa. These are the guys in Israel who support mob violence and riots to gain their ends, and Begin is openly winking at them to keep their support."

Another commentator, reporting from Tel Aviv, compared Begin to France's Louis XIV, noting that the closer Begin gets to losing his grip on power, "the more he feels obliged to create accomplished facts, to make sure that any successor must be left with the situation he has created."

'Riots can no longer be avoided'

In the past few days alone, Israel's Prime Minister has been on a rampage. He has announced that he will move his office to East Jerusalem, the Arab-populated sector of the city that Israel annexed following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. This announcement came in defiance of the fact that East Jerusalem is strongly revered by the Islamic countries and that hardly any government in the world regards Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Simultaneously, Begin has declared a new "get-tough" policy toward the Arabs of the West Bank.

On June 23, Israeli armed forces units for the first time ever shot into milling students on the campus of Bir Zeit University, wounding five.

As tensions mounted, Begin made the remarkable announcement, according to Radio Jerusalem June 25, that no Arab students will be admitted into universities on the West Bank or in Israel if they express sympathy toward the Palestine Liberation Organization, which Begin has incessantly labeled a "murderous organization" and the "Arab SS." Since most Arab students sympathize with the PLO, Begin's policy in effect signifies the mass expulsion of Arab students from the university system of the West Bank and Israel.

The West Bank/Jerusalem policy combination is *designed* to increase support for the most fanatical Muslim Brotherhood-related elements throughout the Islamic world and in the West Bank in particular.

One Gush Emunim leader, Hanan Porat, has con-

firmed this. "Riots between Jews and Arabs can no longer be avoided," Porat stated. "These riots will prove that Jews and Arabs are not capable of living together and will lead to the expulsion of all the Arabs."

Reporting Porat's statement, this month's *Le Monde Diplomatique* stresses that Gush Emunim, "enjoying the support of Menachem Begin and several of his ministers," is hoping for a "worsening of the Cold War," under which conditions "it would be possible to provoke a chain reaction that would lead to the 'departure' of the [Arab] inhabitants from the occupied territories."

'A military dictatorship'

One of the most vociferous pro-Gush ministers is Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, who has funneled money illegally into Gush settlement projects.

Opposing Sharon's request for the Defense Ministry, Deputy Prime Minister Simcha Ehrlich has leaked a letter to the Israeli press in which he wrote that should Sharon achieve such power in Israel, he would "disband the Knesset, declare a military dictatorship, and set up detention camps for his political adversaries."

Even without Sharon heading the Defense Ministry, extensive army stocks are reportedly finding their way into Zionist terrorist groups. According to *Le Figaro* magazine, the most dangerous of these groups is a new "Organization des Amis de Sion" (Organization of the Friends of Zion), whose French-language acronym, OAS, is identical to the French ultrarightist squads that tried to assassinate Charles de Gaulle countless times—with aid from Menachem Begin's Herut Party.

Underlying the fascist trends in Israel is a fundamental demographic shift. As the economy worsens and as Begin's policies block the road to peace, emigration from Israel is accelerating to the extent that there are now 800,000 Israelis living abroad compared to a total Israeli population of 3.1 million. This emigration tendency is particularly strong among professional and skilled layers who are seeking a better situation in the United States and Western Europe. As these leave, they are increasingly replaced by immigrants much more immersed in Zionist ideology.

Baltimore Sun Jerusalem correspondent Ruth Cale reported June 25 that "the present exodus is rapidly developing into a brain drain." At the same time, she cites a Labour Party parliamentarian who "warns that the places of the departing professionals are being taken by Jewish orthodox groups from the United States . . . by recruits for Gush Emunim, and some ultra-nationalists from the Soviet Union."

Simultaneously, the economic crisis is swelling the ranks of the ill-housed and unemployed among the primarily Sephardic Jewish slum-dwellers in Israel's key

The fascist elite

Among the signers of a statement reported in *The Jewish Press* June 20, which demands that Israel refuse any territorial concessions whatever, were former Israeli Air Force chief Dan Tolkovsky and retired General Benjamin Peled.

Tolkovsky is the only Israeli member of the zero-growth Club of Rome International and heads the Israeli branch of the Israeli Discount Bank. The bank, closely tied to Barclays Bank in England, is run by the Genoese-Spanish Recanati family, which has sponsored Zionist cult activities for nearly a millenium.

Peled spent 32 years in the Israeli Air Force after RAF training during World War II. He is currently a managing director of the Israeli Elbit Corporation, which specilizes in procuring highly sophisticated computer and electronics equipment for israel's Defense Ministry and intelligence services.

cities. With financing from top crime-connected financiers, such as convicted swindler and embezzler Samuel Flatto-Sharon, these slum-dwellers have engaged in illegal takeover of land to set up "settlements." Analysts in Israel express concern that these radicalized slum-dwellers can be transformed overnight into fascist stormtroopers.

As the economic crisis deepens, the Israeli internal situation could at any point go out of control. Supposedly as an "anti-inflationary measure," Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz is demanding major cuts in the budget, including in the military. Hurwitz's demands for defense-related cutbacks have led to much grumbling in the country's general staff, especially from strategists who warn that Israel must confront a buildup of armaments in Jordan, Iraq, and Syria. One analyst warned that "this is the stuff of which preemptive strikes are made, since the feeling may be that *now* is the time to strike, before the Arabs' superiority sets in."

Israel's hardline Chief of Staff, Rafael Eytan, who opposes Hurwitz's measures, is demanding that Hurwitz declare an "economic emergency regime" to create strict national controls over the economy. One British journalist has noted that Israel is "theoretically ripe for a coup" because of this interplay of economic collapse and anxiety over "national security."