

New York Times at the center of effort to wreck Israeli institutions

by Mark Burdman

The slogan of the government of Prime Minister Menachem Begin in Israel might now lawfully be, "We kept our jobs through the *New York Times*."

The political fortunes of the beleaguered Begin team were suddenly uplifted Nov. 16 by a nasty little trick performed by the *Times* senior editor Max Frankel.

Just as charges were mounting against Begin's Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, against Begin himself, and others in the government resulting from the ongoing commission of inquiry into the massacre of Palestinians in Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in Lebanon, Frankel, a conduit for the Church of England's policy line, put out a special two-part series on Israel on Nov. 15-16 in the *Times*. The aim of the series: to get the heat off Sharon.

Just returned from Israel, where he stayed at the house of British Intelligence-connected Gen. Chaim Herzog, Frankel reported in the second of the series that top leaders in the opposition to Begin were actively enlisting American support to "topple" Menachem Begin. These same opposition figures, Frankel claimed, are "counselling sharp cuts in America's non-military aid of \$800 million a year" to Israel to aid in this plan to undermine Begin.

In typical slimy *Times* style, Frankel drove his essential point home. These opposition figures, he wrote, "now risk political oblivion" for advocating these ideas.

Within hours of the release of the Frankel piece, all Israeli papers were carrying banner headlines about this opposition "plan." The substance of the story was not the shock: it is commonplace in Israel to discuss the idea of using American aid cutbacks to rein in the Likud Party government, and it is known that high-level Washington administration circles regard the aid question as one crucial way to counter the adventurism of current Israeli state policy. But in reporting on this delicate question in such intentionally crude "hit man" fashion, Frankel destabilized all the substantive elements of the issue, and ensured that Begin and company would have a new trump card.

Charges immediately went flying from high-level Likud

circles that the opposition Labour Party had performed "an act of Satan" by colluding with "an outside power" against the "sovereignty" of Israel. One Likud member of Parliament went so far as to call for a special commission of inquiry to deal with this question!

A British friend of Frankel's stationed in Jerusalem gloated in a discussion with *EIR* that "long-term damage has been done to the long-term prospects of the Labour Party. Every Likud speaker, when election time comes, will now wave copies of the *New York Times* story." One Israeli journalist close to leading Labour circles exploded on hearing of the Frankel story: "This is the best way of keeping Begin in power, by giving him this issue in this way! Goddamit, what the hell does Frankel think he's up to!" The Labour Party has issued a statement calling the Frankel article a slander, and several Labour Party members of parliament have threatened a lawsuit against the *New York Times*.

An Israeli source based in Europe commented wryly, "I am not at all surprised that the special interests behind the *Times* would intervene to prop up Sharon. After all, Sharon is involved in all the dirty West Bank land dealings, and as the Israeli army settles into Lebanon under his direction, the drug trade in the Israel-Lebanon-Syria area is booming. Sharon is in the middle of it all."

Sources in the position to know are drawing the connection between the Frankel dirty trick and the recently documented links between former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger—a good friend of the *Times* editorial board—and Sharon in arranging special West Bank land scams. The same sources are intrigued by the fact that one of the *Times*' top friends and protectors, New York State Attorney-General Robert Mergenthau, has worked with Sharon to channel "investments" into the West Bank and to build up the infrastructure of the Gush Emunim fanatics who are deployed by Sharon to illegally settle in the West Bank occupied area. The circumstances of a joint Sharon-Morgenthau appearance at a November 1980 meeting for a Gush Emunim front group are known to Israel investigators.

If the Labour leadership is not to give up the ghost as a result of Frankel's nasty operation, certain daring political moves will be required. Among these might be exposing the truth about the *New York Times*, including its involvement in helping install Adolf Hitler to power. Simultaneously, the details of the Kissinger crowd's West Bank scams should be made public in Israel at the earliest possible date. This would have the amiable linked effect of cleaning out what Kissingerian influence exists in the Labour Party itself, freeing that party to come up with novel and creative ideas for the politics of the region, instead of being bonded by Kissinger's Mafia-style step-by-step thuggery.

The Kimche connection

Sources have identified, in addition to Henry Kissinger, Israel Foreign Ministry Director-General David Kimche as a key behind-the-scenes architect of the operation to destroy the Labour Party and to put Israel into the hands of a "new breed" of Sephardic, or Oriental, Jews led by its most unenlightened elements.

Kimche is of Swiss origin; his family owns a bank, Kimche and Landau, in Switzerland. According to insiders, he is working closely with British intelligence to undercut U.S. influence in Israel and the region. Kimche's strategy is to "play the Soviet card." In December, Kimche's close friend Edgar Bronfman, head of the World Jewish Congress and Seagrams Liquor, and a front man for British imperial money via Canada, will visit Moscow at the invitation of Georgii Arbatov, director of the U.S.A.-Canada Studies Institute in Moscow. It is rumored that Bronfman will meet with new Soviet Communist Party chief Yuri Andropov during his stay.

Last December, Kimche worked out a secret arrangement with Bronfman whereby Bronfman would serve as unofficial liaison between Israel and the United States. Kimche's anti-U.S. maneuvers have reportedly caused much consternation in the middle and lower ranks of the Foreign Ministry as well as in the armed forces.

David Kimche's older brother Jon, who operates directly out of London, maintains decades-long ties to British intelligence as a journalist. During World War II, Jon Kimche worked for the London *Observer* at the same time as did Britain's triple agent Kim Philby, now a general in the KGB.

Several of Kimche's U.S.-based associates are currently involved in a project sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations in New York to plan the post-Begin era. The CFR project, or study group, has reportedly drawn up a blueprint for transforming Israel into a fundamentalist Sephardic state unwilling to make peace with its Arab neighbors and incapable of ever serving as a radiation point for culture and technology in the region in the context of peace.

However, a high-level Labour Party source told *EIR* in mid-November that he and others in Israel would welcome a development-oriented approach to the Middle East, along the lines promoted by *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche. "There

is no doubt that any idea with a positive purpose of development, modern technology, and so on, would be helpful. The question is whether the United States would accept this policy," the source declared.

A political earthquake?

On the eve of the Frankel dirty trick, the evaluation of sources in the Labour leadership had been that Israel was on the brink of a "political earthquake," as a result of the developments of the past weeks, that would bring the Begin-Sharon team crashing down from power. Despite Frankel's hurried intervention, tendencies in that direction emphatically still exist.

For one thing, Begin himself has become a political wild card, after the death of his ailing wife. There has been some speculation in Israel that, in memory of his wife, Begin will now launch some new defiant actions, perhaps including the annexation of the West Bank. Other indications are that the ailing Begin could soon retire. A scramble for power is already under way in the Likud Party corridors.

Israel is simultaneously reeling over the mysterious explosion at Israeli army headquarters in Tyre, southern Lebanon Nov. 11, which resulted in 89 dead. This has been labelled the "biggest single disaster" in the history of the Israeli Army, by the Israeli press. While Sharon is now trying to claim the episode was an accident, rather than an act of sabotage, in either case it is he who comes out smelling bad, since he is responsible for overall direction of the Armed Forces and is the original architect of Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon.

In the days leading up to the *New York Times* intervention, Sharon was being hit very hard in the commission of inquiry hearings. Colonel Hevroni, bureau chief to the head of army intelligence, told the hearings on Nov. 11 that Sharon's close aide, Avi Dudai, "was not telling the truth" in denying that Sharon's office knew of the ongoing massacre in the Palestinian camps by the Falangist forces. Three days later, Lt.-Col. Zeev Zecharia, Chief of Bureau of Israeli Chief of Staff Rafael Eytan, swore under oath that Sharon and his aides were lying when they denied to the commission any knowledge of the Falangist massacre of Palestinians on Sept. 14. Colonel Zecharia also presented convincing evidence that Begin himself had not been telling the truth in his testimony.

Zecharia's testimony was described by Israeli sources as a "political bombshell."

While it is known that bad blood exists between Sharon and chief of staff Eytan, a much more profound reason exists for the testimony of army people against Sharon in particular. According to a high-level Israeli military source, "the army as an institution thinks that Sharon's policies have jeopardized them," and are using the vehicle of the commission to fight back.

Through Nov. 18, damning testimony continued. Former Deputy Defense Minister and current Minister of Commu-

nication Mordechai Zippori testified under oath that information had been passed concerning the ongoing massacre of Palestinians to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, earmarked for Sharon's special attention, the morning of Friday, Sept. 17. This directly contradicted Sharon's denial of knowledge of the ongoing massacre, and indicates either another Sharon lie, or some kind of blockage of information from within Foreign Ministry circles.

The commission is due to complete its work within the next few weeks, and then will issue a final report. Given the growing evidence against him, Sharon, in the view of informed Israeli sources, may try in the next period to "bring down everybody with him" if he collapses politically. These sources think that Sharon may try to "judo" the commission process into an indictment of the armed forces themselves for their actions during the September events.

This raises the danger that the commission, with all the charges and countercharges it has unearthed, could become a political football, an instrument for byzantine factional intrigues, rather than a tool to rectify the direction of Israeli policy. To do the latter, the commission or other institutions in Israel, would have to be willing to investigate the deeper questions of policy that led Israel into its own "Vietnam" in Lebanon. This, again, would necessarily bring to the fore the primary role of Henry Kissinger over the past decade in having engineered the process of destabilization in Lebanon, and would show the interface between the pretentious strategic designs of Kissinger and Sharon.

This kind of cleansing process would bring real politics to the fore in Israel, and allow substantive policy dispute to openly emerge. Israeli sources report, for example, that a profound subterranean debate now exists in Israeli policy circles over what stance to take toward Egypt. According to these indications, a mainstream tendency in the armed forces and intelligence services tends to support a stable Egypt headed by a strong President Mubarak, while the groupings around Sharon want to see Egypt and Mubarak weakened and brought to their knees.

It remains to be seen whether the commission-of-inquiry process will evolve into a more fundamental policy debate of the kind the country sorely needs.

Succession scramble

Under prevailing circumstances, it is by no means certain that Frankel's efforts by themselves can prop up Sharon, given the barrage thrown at him in the inquiry commission. Barring the launching of a new round of military provocations, Sharon may not be able to survive. As one British source in Jerusalem put it Nov. 18, "Sharon may have to be sacrificed."

The least that can be said is that Sharon's chances for succeeding Begin have drastically diminished. With Begin's own ailing health a prime focus of concern in Israel, a scramble for the succession has begun.

One candidate is Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who

has built up an "extensive" network of ties into British-centered policy circles. It was noted with interest in Britain that Shamir made great efforts to signal a desire for renewed relations with the Soviet Union after the accession to power of Yuri Andropov.

A second contender is Finance Minister Yoram Aridor, who has been a master of the game of manipulating money to cover up the extent of Israel's economic plight. But with over 130 percent inflation, and reports now surfacing about how Israel's economy is run top-down by the mafia of the "Chicago School" at the University of Chicago, it is thought that Aridor will be too discredited to run. This leaves aside the question about the extent to which Aridor's manipulations have been possible only because of the extensive "dirty money" and laundering operations expanding into Israel in the past years.

A third contender and likely front-runner is Housing Minister David Levy, a Sephardic Jew. Levy is favored by certain British-centered circles who want to shift the belief-structure of Israel into a yet more fundamentalist direction, by making more vocal the anti-Arab sentiments of significant segments of the Sephardic Jews. One of the case officers for this project is reportedly British Parliament member and Freemasonic leader Julian Amery, who spent a week holding secretive meetings in Israel during the beginning of November. Amery is reportedly also working to bring fundamentalist Christians into increasing alliance with the more extreme wings of Zionism.

Amery's activities in this regard evidently disturbed some Labour Party-linked layers in Israel, since the pro-Labour *Jerusalem Post*, in reporting on his trip, "reminded" its readership that it had been Julian Amery's brother John who had been hanged for pro-Nazi activities after the Second World War. This *Jerusalem Post* leak reportedly upset the Amery household in London a great deal.

While this effort to undercut Amery would evidence a healthy trend within Labour, the politics within that party are at this point not effectively organized to capitalize on the ongoing ferment in Israel. Irrespective of Max Frankel, Labour is still beset by internal political wranglings between party secretary Shimon Peres and former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

For this reason, attention is still focused on the office of the Presidency. President Yitzhak Navon, himself a Sephardic Jew, is seen as the one promising figure on the horizon to rally Labour around a positive conception. But Navon has not resolved yet whether he will decide to run for the premiership. An important November trip planned for him for the United States was suddenly postponed to early January, under circumstances that are not entirely clear. By the time of that U.S. trip, his intentions should be clearer, and this may pave the way for some important consultations in Washington and other American cities.

He would just be well advised to stay away from the offices of the *New York Times*.