

Middle East Report by Thierry Lalevée

New plots by Islamic International

The last three months' terror in the Mideast and North Africa was planned at a secret meeting in Switzerland.

An international seminar organized in Geneva on March 10, by the London-based Islamic Council of Europe chaired by Saudi diplomat Salam Azzam, has served as a cover for secret meetings between leaders of the so-called Islamic International. Many key leaders from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa gathered in Geneva for two days to give speeches on the "historic role of Islam" in liberation movements. Although attendance never exceeded 30-40 participants, the real reason for their coming to Switzerland was a secret reunion days later at the suburban residence of Algerian fundamentalist Ahmed Ben Bella.

To this extraordinary gathering came Salem Azzam; Turkey's Necet Erbakan; the leadership of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood; Hafez Salama of the Islamic Guidance Association; and the blind Sheikh Omar Abder Rahmane, founder of the Egyptian Jihad terrorist movement. Also present were Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual guide of the Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Ali Shamskhani, deputy commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

The conference was chaired by the little-known Swiss-based Egyptian Brotherhood leader Yussuf Nada, confirming his role as an international coordinator of the Muslim Brotherhood or "Islamic International." A Lugano-based Egyptian businessman who runs maritime and cement companies all over Black Africa, Nada came to notoriety in 1979 when he loaned \$10 million to the U.S.-based

Muslim Student Association to build a computerized intelligence data file at its Plainfield, Indiana headquarters.

In recent years, Nada's name emerged around the activities of Ben Bella, as well as of Lebanese Shi'ite squads touring Europe, and the activities of Islamic centers in West Germany. According to intelligence sources, Nada was named in the last two years as one of the Guides of the Brotherhood, coordinating its activities through a network which, thanks to Ben Bella, intersects the Nazi International of Swiss banker François Genoud. Hence, Nada's activities are closely watched by European intelligence units.

Under his chairmanship, two intertwined campaigns were launched: to organize larger, more regular financial aid to Middle Eastern and North African fundamentalist organizations, and to plan for a summer offensive in the region. For the first time, all pretenses were swept away, as the leader of the underground terrorist Jihad, Sheikh Abder Rahmane, agreed to work hand in hand with the mainstream of the Brotherhood. A radical splinter from the Ikhwan (Brotherhood), the Jihad has often considered it too moderate, refusing to coordinate activities on a regular basis. All the more extraordinary, the fanatic blind Sheikh agreed to extend such coordination to the other participants, such as Turkey and Iran. The actual leader of the Ikhwan, Sheikh Telemsani, had not been invited, and had no say. He died in April, not long after the Ge-

neva meeting, and was replaced by the more radical Mohammed Hameed Abu El Nasr.

The plotters put special stress on their operations in Egypt. Less than two weeks after the clandestine gathering, the Ikhwan launched assaults against the town of Asyut in Upper Egypt.

Their planned operations against North Africa were momentarily set back in April, when the new French government launched police operations against the Ben Bella network, in the wake of the U.S. raid on Libya. Dozens of members of Ben Bella's organizations were arrested; some deported. Fundamentalist operations in Tunisia had an uneasy fate too, as Paris has established close security cooperation with Tunis in recent months.

However, Tunisian fundamentalists succeeded in April and May in staging anti-American demonstrations at the universities, and clashing with the police, forcing the government to close the universities for several weeks. Unable to run their usual smuggling routes between France and Tunisia, the fundamentalists have shifted tactics for getting weapons. Tunisian intelligence reports several cases where policemen have been attacked, and had their weapons seized by the fundamentalists.

None of the participants at the Lausanne conference had any serious hope that they could successfully take over either Tunisia or Algeria, but they thought that Egypt is ripe for spectacular operations which could catalyze mass fundamentalist movements in the region, as Khomeini's takeover of Iran did in 1979. Egyptian fundamentalists are reported to have committed 350 terrorist acts in the last three months, including boobytrapping cars and carrying out machine-gun attacks on U.S. military targets.