

# Israeli Mossad backs Arab fundamentalists

by Scott Thompson

Shortly after the Palestinian uprising began in the Israeli-occupied territories, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir warned that the uprising had been taken over by Islamic fundamentalists. Shamir sounded this alarm in Western Europe and the United States, in an attempt to break support for the Palestinians, whom he portrayed as having turned toward the fundamentalists' concept of *Jihad*, or Holy War.

Now, several reliable sources have confirmed that it was an Israeli intelligence operation that encouraged the growth of that very Islamic fundamentalism against which Shamir had warned. The Israeli Mossad's purpose was to pit its homegrown fundamentalists against the Palestine Liberation Organization for control of the uprising. Shamir has not only been caught crying "wolf," but the security services of his country are now found playing with Islamic fundamentalist forces in a fashion that could mean suicide for the state of Israel by the turn of the century. It was the same suicidal impulse, following Anglo-Venetian imperial policies of the "Great Game," that led a significant faction in Israel to support the policy of dumping the Shah of Iran in exchange for the Ayatollah Khomeini. This policy, begun in consonance with the Carter administration, continued into the second Reagan-Bush administration, when the Israelis suckered the United States into attempting back-channel deals with Iran over release of the hostages.

## The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic fundamentalist cult spawned by the British Secret Intelligence Service out of Oxford and Cambridge, has been officially active in the Middle East since 1928. British SIS has used the Brotherhood repeatedly to destabilize such governments as Egypt, where it has sought to erode any progressive political current. After the death of its British-trained leader Sabri al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood went underground, with a secret leadership, to become the scourge of any Middle East government that sought moderation. The Muslim Brotherhood's reach extended into Palestine in the 1940s, where it remained a minor force until the recent period, when the Israeli Mossad picked it up, to foster it in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as a counterweight to the PLO.

Today, the most active wing of the Muslim Brotherhood

in Palestine is the Hamas (Zeal), acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, whose main base is among the poor in the Gaza Strip. Contrasted with the PLO, which favors a secular state of Palestine, Hamas wants to found an Islamic Republic similar to Iran. Hamas also rejects the "two-state solution" that the PLO has increasingly adopted, which would accept neighboring states of Palestine and Israel, living together in peace.

Originally, Palestinian sources report, the Israeli Establishment thought it had an added ace-in-the-hole, because Hamas rejected the "armed struggle" preached by the PLO. It was at this time, Palestinian sources add, that Israeli Mossad funds went for the training of members of Hamas with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which is banned as a party because of its role in continual destabilizations—including the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat by a radical wing of the Brotherhood known as Jihad (Holy War). Thus, Israel had, as a matter of "security policy," arranged for the covert alliance between Hamas and those forces that murdered the Arab leader who had undertaken the "Camp David" peace negotiation with Israel.

There are Palestinians today, who believe that Israel may now recognize that it has created a "Frankenstein monster." Where Hamas initially rejected "armed struggle," it is now Hamas that rejects attempts by PLO chairman Yasser Arafat to turn the uprising into diplomatic gains. An even more radical wing of Hamas emerged after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, known as Islamic Jihad, which has launched a series of assassination attempts against Israeli occupation officials and Jewish settlers. Last year, Israel cracked down upon Jihad in the Gaza Strip, arresting dozens of activists and expelling six others, including Sheik Abd Aziz Odeh, who was the publicly identified leader of the group.

Despite this crackdown on Jihad, Hamas has continued to operate unhampered by Israeli occupation forces, who regularly shoot, beat, and arrest members of the PLO-linked council that runs the uprising. Lately, Hamas has come to criticize the PLO openly, on the basis that Hamas claims all of Israel/Palestine as an Islamic trust. Hamas has also called lately, through public spokesman Sheikh Ahmed Yessin, head of the Islamic Center in Gaza, for a *Jihad* against Israel. Also, in mid-August, Hamas made a bid for increased influence in the West Bank, where the uprising was previously under solid PLO control. Hamas called for a general strike to mark the 19th anniversary of the first attempt to destroy the Al Aqsa Mosque on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, which has been a repeated target ever since for Jewish fundamentalists who seek to rebuild Solomon's Temple on the mount and expel all Arabs from the occupied territories.

During the one-day general strike, youth linked to Hamas openly clashed with PLO leaders to enforce the strike, while Israeli occupation officials let them carry out these attacks. In its covert support for Hamas, Israeli authorities are truly playing with national suicide.