

Sharon Makes War While Rabin Is Mourned

by Dean Andromidas

In the evening of Oct. 17,* Israel commemorated the seventh anniversary of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was murdered by an Israeli right-wing extremist. This day is officially commemorated every year, but this year Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon chose to absent himself, going to Washington to plot a new Middle East war with President George Bush.

Israeli commentator Nehemia Strasler, writing in *Ha'aretz*, conveyed the bitterness of those who saw Rabin as one of Israel's most important statesmen, the man who signed the Oslo Accords with Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat on Sept. 13, 1993: "Today is the anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Ariel Sharon won't be in the country, he won't take part in the state memorial ceremony, at Mt. Herzl—and it's best that way. Hypocrisy also has to have its limits. Some of us will not forget—and will never forget—that Sharon was one of those who stood on the incitement stage in Jerusalem's Zion Square when the crowd raised signs showing Rabin dressed in an SS uniform, and those on the platform did not protest. He took an active part in the incitement against Rabin, and called the Oslo agreements—a courageous and important act of statesmanship that could have brought peace and security and economic prosperity—'an act of treason.' "

Strasler wrote that under Rabin, Israel experienced unparalleled economic growth because of the promise of peace which the Oslo Accords brought with them, but now Sharon is committed to anything but peace. Sharon will "continue the war until the other side surrenders, if it surrenders, and to encourage lawbreakers in Hebron who make a disgrace of the term Jew; he's ready to advance colonial expansion on every hilltop to make clear that the Palestinians have no chance to ever get a state; he's ready to humiliate the Palestinians' leadership. . . . Sharon is not interested in negotiations, because then he would really have to concede the territories and the settlements, and he doesn't have the courage to do so, because it would endanger his regime, supported, as it is, by the extreme right."

While Israeli President Moshe Katsav led a commemorative event at his official residence on this darkest of Israeli anniversaries, President George Bush was meeting his "close friend" Sharon, to give him what many observers believe is a

* This is the anniversary, according to the Jewish calendar, on Cheshvan 12, 5763. Rabin was shot on Nov. 4, 1995.

green light for war. Bush told reporters, "If Iraq attacks Israel tomorrow, I would assume the Prime Minister would respond." Although Sean McCormack, spokesman of the U.S. National Security Council, tried to qualify that statement by saying that if the United States attacked Iraq, it would be a "qualitatively different situation," it is doubtful whether Sharon will pay heed to this nuance. One senior Israeli intelligence source said, "McCormack is not the President. . . . It's clear to me that Sharon is totally out of control."

Expressing his pleasure with Bush's backing, Sharon said, "As far as I remember . . . I think we never had such relations with any President of the United States as we have with you, and we never had such cooperation in everything as we have with the current administration."

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Terje Roed-Larsen, in a commentary appearing in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* on this anniversary, warned that if Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations are not begun soon, we are "nearing the death of the two-state solution, the bedrock for all our peacemaking efforts." In 1993, it was Roed-Larsen who, from his position in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, hosted the Israeli-Palestinian talks out of which came the Oslo Accords. But now he has warned that if the international community does not take action to get peace talks restarted, Israel's continued military operations and expansion of settlements will lead to the collapse of the Palestinian Authority and create chaos in the West Bank and Gaza. He wrote that the "other option," if the two-state solution collapses, "is Israel controlling the land, but without the people. That is known as 'transfer.'" Roed-Larsen thus confirms, for the first time publicly, that official circles in Europe fear that Sharon will implement his "final solution"—expulsion of the Palestinians—if Bush attacks Iraq.

Murderers of Rabin Run Wild

The Israeli extremists, who applauded the murder of Rabin, commemorated his death by launching massive provocations throughout the West Bank. These provocations did not make headlines in the international press, because they were overshadowed by Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer's deployment of Israeli troops to dismantle a handful of "illegal outposts" built by settlers in the West Bank. The move was nothing more than a "dog and pony show," timed for Sharon's visit to Washington, where he was expected to come under pressure from the U.S. State Department on the question of settlements. The Israeli organization Peace Now, among others, has exposed this farce, reporting that the "illegal outposts" that are being dismantled, had been erected solely for this purpose, and in coordination with the Israeli military. Peace Now reports that there are over 100 so-called illegal outposts and settlements that have been built in the last two years. They warn that the dismantling of 30 such outposts, all of which comprise empty caravans, is just an exercise aimed at covering the fact that the government will soon turn around and declare the 70 others to be "legal." Peace Now



The late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, speaking on Oct. 25, 1995 in Washington. He was shot shortly upon his return to Israel, by an assassin from the Israeli extremist milieu—the people who are now maintaining Ariel Sharon in office, and have ripped up the peace agreements that Rabin signed.

correctly points out that *all* settlements are “illegal” under international law.

The reality is that the settlers are being allowed to run wild, with the aim of creating a pretext for escalation of Sharon’s military operations and a new regional war. This was dramatically demonstrated once more in the West Bank city of Hebron, where, in February 1994, Jewish settler-terrorist Dr. Baruch Goldstein murdered 30 or more Muslim worshippers in the mosque where the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the burial site of Abraham, is located. *EIR* reported last week that Israeli security sources fear a replay of this bloody event in the next weeks. No sooner did this warning appear in the Israeli press, than the settlers launched new provocations.

Operating out of a small settlement in the heart of Hebron’s old city, the settlers have systematically attacked the homes of Palestinians who live near the Jewish settlement. Under the noses of the Israeli police, settlers have entered these homes, destroyed property, and forced the Palestinians out, moving Jews in. This has continued even though a few weeks ago, these settlers brutally attacked Israeli police and Palestinians alike during one of their “anti-Arab pogroms” (see *EIR*, Aug. 23). On Oct. 12, the settlers escalated their operations and attacked the offices of the Waqf (the Islamic Trust), which are part of the complex that includes the mosque which houses the Tomb of the Patriarchs. These fascist thugs ransacked the offices and made a bonfire out of documents, including property deeds, which they took out of the offices. They then assaulted the muezzin, preventing him from enter-

ing the mosque to call the faithful to prayers. All this was done while the Israeli military had the entire city under a lockdown curfew. If any Palestinians should dare leave their homes, they are shot dead on sight.

Hebron’s Palestinian Governor, Arif Alhjabari, warned the Israelis that these settlers could “ignite the city.”

Still, the Israeli police did nothing. The obvious reason is that these thugs are controlled from the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba, where Goldstein lived. Their controller is Ze’ev Hever, whom Sharon calls “my friend Zambish,” a member of the terrorist Jewish Underground in the 1980s. No settler activities occur in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, without his approval. Hever gets his orders from Sharon, whom he meets several times each week.

Israeli Opposition Speaks Out

Yossi Sarid, chairman of the pro-peace Meretz party and leader of the opposition in the Israeli Knesset (parliament), denounced the settlers in a hard-hitting commentary in *Ha’aretz* on Oct. 9, entitled “Greater Sodom and Its Daughters.” Sarid wrote: “The settlers are the only people who make me ashamed of what I am—an Israeli and a Jew. . . . Sometimes I think that if they are Jews, then I must be something completely different. . . . I have nothing in common with them and we are strangers to each other. At all events, we are not human brothers, and if that is the case, there is no danger of a civil war. . . .

“For many years we have been aware of what is happening in Hebron, how Jews treat their neighbors there. It was a mistake from the start to plant this cancerous growth in the heart of a densely populated Arab town. It was a recipe for perpetual calamity. . . . The second fateful mistake was when they did not uproot the growth after the massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.” With the settlers, “it is not a question of a different outlook, but of a different planet, one that shows signs of life, but from people who do not have human shape. . . . Perhaps it is indeed easier to be ashamed than to actually rise up against Sodom, which has expanded its borders so that today it includes greater Sodom, with its daughters Tapuah and Itamar [West Bank settlements], with its capital, Hebron. This is a Sodom that is deceiving to the eye. For all we see are beautiful vistas of olive trees.” Then, as a warning which Sharon and the rest of Israel should take seriously, Sarid wrote, “This is the Sodom of the Jewish state.”