

U.S. Christian 'fundamentalists' front for Israel's Begin on the West Bank

by Nancy Coker

When Prime Minister Menachem Begin visited the United States in November 1982, his itinerary raised eyebrows. Unlike visits by other Israeli prime ministers over the years, Begin's trip was not centered on official Washington and meetings with American Jewish leaders. Instead, Begin was to spend the bulk of his time in California and Texas, consolidating an alliance, long in the making, with America's Christian fundamentalist sects.

Although Begin had to cut his visit short because of the death of his wife, from his standpoint the trip was a success. Among the key items up for discussion was a most secret and sensitive topic: real estate speculation on the West Bank. Along with Henry Kissinger, Kissinger's business associates Lord Harlech and Lord Carrington in Britain, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, and a host of other oligarchical and mafia-linked figures, America's Christian fundamentalists are up to their ears in a massive real estate scam involving the purchase of Arab-owned West Bank land. The ultimate objective: to ensure that by 1985 at least 60 percent of the West Bank is in Jewish hands.

The middlemen for many of these deals are Christian fundamentalists, who are buying up huge tracts of land from the Arabs and then transferring title to the Israelis.

The overriding purpose of this West Bank land grab is to preclude any U.S.-mediated settlement of the Arab-Israeli crisis entailing an Israeli surrender of the West Bank.

Another purpose is money. Large combines have been formed in Israel, the United States, and Europe to reap huge profits from the resale of West Bank land. The mark-up is 100 percent.

But it's not just Henry Kissinger, Ariel Sharon, and their cronies who are smiling all the way to the bank. The British, and their allies in Moscow, are too.

The Anglo-Soviet angle

In deliberately avoiding Washington as he did, and by publicly linking himself with the fundamentalists, Begin has declared war on Reagan and the Reagan peace plan. Unlike President Reagan, and unlike most American Jews, U.S.

Christian fundamentalists are totally supportive of the Begin government's excesses in Lebanon and of Israel's fanatic refusal to relinquish the West Bank and negotiate a meaningful peace with its Arab neighbors. The Begin government intends to use its alliance with the U.S. fundamentalists, the majority of whom voted for Reagan in the 1980 election, as a battering ram against the President in the 1983-84 pre-election period.

Begin's hook-up with the fundamentalists is confirmation that Israel, under Begin and Sharon, has opted to play along with Great Britain and the Soviet Union to humiliate and undermine the United States in the Middle East. The destruction of U.S. influence in the region is important if Anglo-Soviet designs to impose a zero-growth neo-Malthusian order worldwide are to succeed. To ensure success, the British and the Soviets have joined hands with Greater Israeli cultists like Sharon. Sharon views the United States as the main obstacle to his wild plans to expand the size of Israel, and thus has become the natural ally of London and Moscow in their efforts to eliminate Washington as an effective power broker in the Middle East.

The London-Israeli axis is not surprising to those familiar with the role that Britain played historically in the creation of Christian fundamentalism. Although U.S. historians are fond of portraying fundamentalism as a home-grown American phenomenon, fundamentalism was in fact imported in the 19th century from Great Britain to the United States under the auspices of John Nelson Darby, an Anglican priest. One insider admitted as much: "Without Britain's input, the evangelical movement would never have happened, because the British are the ones who concocted the whole theological schema."

According to the Christian fundamentalist belief structure, Israel plays a central role in God's plan for humanity. "The state of Israel is the precursor of what God ultimately wants to do on the earth and in the heavens," the same source commented. Not surprisingly, many of the British statesmen responsible for the birth of Israel—Lord Balfour and Lloyd George—were also evangelicals. To this day, many evangel-

icals continue to refer to themselves as "Christian Zionists."

As many Israelis and American Jews fear, the growth of fundamentalism and the continued dominance of Sharon's world view inside Israel threaten to transform Israel into a Khomeini-style Jewish fundamentalist state, where irrationalism prevails, accommodation with Israel's Arab neighbors is impossible, and the idea of Israel's eventually serving as a radiation point for science and culture in the region is obliterated.

"I hate to say it," a prominent Israeli novelist told *EIR*, "but under this government, Israel is poised on the precipice of becoming what so many of us, ironically, fled so many decades ago: a fascist state."

Begin's embrace of Christian fundamentalism—the so-called Moral Majority—will only hasten that process.

Terry Reisenhuver: the new Nehemiah

A key figure in the West Bank land scam is Terry Reisenhuver, a Malibu, California, businessman and a Christian fundamentalist. As president of Alaska Leasing Company, Sunbelt Homes, and several other ventures, Reisenhuver has emerged as an important bagman in the buying up of the West Bank.

Reisenhuver's "religious" activities revolve around three fundamentalist entities: his recently formed Temple Mount Foundation, based in California and Jerusalem; the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Understanding, run out of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Tav Evangelical Ministries in Portland, Oregon, a "Christian" adjunct to the fanatical—and militant—Jewish settlement cult, Gush Emunim.

The Temple Mount Foundation has three goals. The first is to "carry out Biblical prophecy" by rebuilding in Jerusalem the Third Temple. The project, which has yet to be publicly launched, is an explosive one, in that the site of the planned rebuilding is now occupied by the Dome of the Rock mosque, the second holiest spot in Islam.

"My business activities take a back seat to my Temple Mount Foundation," explained Reisenhuver. "The background for what I am doing is found in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Nehemiah was an individual outside the Jewish circumstance who worked to get the Second Temple built. Twelve years ago, I consecrated myself to be the new Nehemiah, to build the Third Temple. I never quite knew how I would do it until a little more than a year ago, when I found myself in Israel working with several people committed to rebuilding the Temple and to restoring Jewish control over the Temple Mount, which is now run by the Muslims."

Reisenhuver's two other goals, both of which are kept under wraps, are the acquisition of Arab property in the Old City of Jerusalem, and the acquisition of Arab property on the West Bank. "This is a very delicate matter," commented Reisenhuver, "and we are working very discreetly on it. Several members of the Temple Mount Foundation are involved in purchasing land. In the Old City, we have managed

to acquire property on the corner of David Street across from the Citadel, as the Jerusalem headquarters of the Temple Mount Foundation. We are currently trying to close on an Arab building on Elwad Road near the Temple Mount, but unfortunately we are being blocked by the Wakf [Muslim Religious Council] that controls the Temple Mount. The Elwad Road building is a key location for carrying out our planned subterranean archeological excavations under the Temple Mount, without the Arabs being privy to what we are up to.

"The main problem," said Reisenhuver, "is that the Arabs run the risk of being killed if they sell their land to Jews. So this is where we come in. On the Arab side, we are working with some very friendly Palestinians who are greedy enough to cooperate with us and in some cases front for us."

'A solid, legitimate terrorist'

The head of the Temple Mount Foundation office in Jerusalem is Stanley Goldfoot, a member of the terrorist Stern Gang in the 1940s. Originally from South Africa, Goldfoot is a friend of Begin's and is reputed to have personally carried in the dynamite that blew up the King David Hotel. "Goldfoot is a very solid, legitimate terrorist," said Reisenhuver in describing Goldfoot's leadership qualifications.

Another on-site Temple Mount Foundation operative is Zvi Slonem, who, according to one account, "is actively and aggressively buying land on the West Bank." Slonem, a founder of a Gush Emunim West Bank settlement, "definitely has the blessings of the Begin government," the source said. Other Israelis working with Slonem and the Temple Mount Foundation are Eduardo Recanati, Prof. Harel Fish of Bar-Ilan University, Prof. Asher Kaufman of Hebrew University, and Prof. Moshe Sharon of military intelligence as well as Hebrew and Bar-Ilan Universities.

The Temple Mount crowd works closely with ultra-extremist kneset members Geula Cohen and Hanan Porat of the fascist Tehiya Party of Yuval Neeman. One not-so-friendly Israeli official vis-à-vis the Foundation is Interior Minister Yosef Burg, head of the National Religious Party. According to insiders, the Temple Mount Foundation fundamentalists, working in coordination with Begin, Sharon, and the Tehiya crazies, are out to break Burg's opposition to a Temple Mount adventure on the West Bank planned for February.

"The plan is the following," said Reisenhuver. "The Temple Mount people plan to go into the mosque in the West Bank town of Hebron next month and locate, using ground-penetrating radar, the tombs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Between you and me, I have very little interest to know where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are buried. All that I am interested in doing is setting precedents, so that we can go into the Temple Mount, show the Arabs who's boss, tunnel around underground, build our temple, and so forth. The problem is that we have to get Burg in line. He is refusing to give us permission to go into the mosque in Hebron, because he is

worried about riots and unrest. There is a lot of animosity between our group and Burg. We consider him a reprobate, in short. When I am in Israel in January, we will meet with Burg and deliver him a message if he is still balking."

The message may have already been delivered. In December, Burg's house was vandalized by Sephardic thugs sympathetic to Gush Emunim and Temple Mount Foundation extremism. Efforts are also underway by Begin and Sharon to remove Burg and the National Religious Party from the government coalition by going for early elections. The NRP is also being undermined from the inside with the expected defection of the fanatical Gush-allied faction around Haim Druckman.

One hundred million dollars

The Temple Mount Foundation expects to raise \$100 million in 1983, its first full year of operation. An application for non-profit status was recently filed and is expected to be okayed soon. In the meantime, all money is being laundered through the Harrisburg-based American Forum for Jewish-Christian Understanding, on whose board of directors Reisenhuver sits. The president of the Forum is one Rabbi David Ben-Ami, who is described as "a freelance type" and who has been charged with lining up Jewish support—both financial and otherwise—for the Temple Mount Foundation and West Bank land purchases.

Ben-Ami maintains close working relations with numerous individuals affiliated with the Gush Emunim-linked P.E.A.C.E. movement (Preventing the Emergence of Another Arab Country in Judea, Samaria and Gaza). P.E.A.C.E., like the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Understanding, was formed two years ago under the sponsorship of Ariel Sharon, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, and others. In November 1982, a "Rally for Israel" was held in Washington by the American Forum in collaboration with Christian fundamentalists. A number of Reisenhuver's and Ben-Ami's contacts participated, including P.E.A.C.E. member Rabbi Herzl Kranz of Silver Spring, Maryland, and Rabbi Haberman of the National Synagogue in Washington, D.C. Reisenhuver and Ben-Ami are known to be collaborating with the Zionist Organization of America, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, and the Anti-Defamation League. In fact, it was the ADL that originally came up with the idea to invite Begin to participate in a fundamentalist "Rally for Israel" in Texas last November. "The ADL understands the evangelicals better than the evangelicals understand themselves," commented Dr. Paige Patterson, an evangelical leader from the First Baptist Church of Dallas, which was to have hosted Begin during his stay there.

Although many Orthodox Jews are open to working with the fundamentalists in areas pertaining to Israel, most appear to be resistant to going all the way with Reisenhuver and Ben-Ami. "I will work with them in defending Israel," said one Brooklyn-based Orthodox rabbi. "I will work with them to

buy up land. But when it comes to building the Third Temple, forget it. The Third Temple will come from Heaven."

In Washington, the Temple Mount crowd has approached Special Assistant to the President Morton Blackwell for co-operation. Blackwell is very closely linked to the American "New Right" and Bill Buckley's National Review crowd, one of whom, Paul Weyrich, is the brains behind the fundamentalists' political arm, The Religious Round Table. According to one source, Interior Secretary Watt is "very much interested" in what Reisenhuver et al. are up to, as is Secretary of Defense Weinberger. Reisenhuver is also said to be working with several South American business interests, whose identities "are too sensitive to talk about now," according to one insider.

The Stanford Research Institute

One of Reisenhuver's top West coast adjutants is Doug Krieger, formerly of Tav Evangelical Ministries in Portland, Oregon. Tav is comprised of approximately 150 lay fundamentalists who have banded together "to open up an interchange with the Jewish community and with Israel." Behind the scenes, Krieger admits, "we are very much in touch with the Gush Emunim." Specifically, Krieger added, "we are working together on a very vast scale with regards to real estate, and that's all I can say at this point. The only problem that we have is that if the Arab sells his land to a Jew, his life is threatened. So we have to circumvent that little problem, and still get the land in the hand of the Jew. That is being done. They may not sell it to a Jew, but they would not mind necessarily selling it to a Christian, and/or a consortium of business interests. So that is now afoot."

In addition to stirring up trouble on the West Bank, Tav Ministries, in the words of Krieger, is "very much involved with Rios Montt," the fundamentalist president of Guatemala, and is advising the State Department on the situation there from a "fundamentalist vantage." "The Israelis, of course, are training the Guatemalan army. There's a really nice little tie-in going on in Guatemala," Krieger added.

Krieger is now working out of Stanford Research Institute, where a new Center for Biblical and Archeological Studies was just opened up in cooperation with the Temple Mount Foundation and the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Cooperation. Lambert Dolphin, who is chairman of the Radiophysics Department, is heading up the new Center's planned excavations, on behalf of Reisenhuver, in Hebron and on the Temple Mount. Dolphin was recruited to the Temple Mount project by Stanley Goldfoot in Jerusalem last year. Krieger then introduced Lambert to Reisenhuver, and the project was launched.

Significantly, Secretary of State George Shultz sat on SRI's board of trustees. When asked what Shultz's connections were to the West Bank land scam and related activities, one source refused to deny Shultz's involvement, saying the issue was "too hot to discuss at this time."