

International Intelligence

Israeli demonstrators fed up with political crisis

The largest demonstration in Israel in eight years took place in Tel Aviv on April 7, demanding an end to the political paralysis gripping the country. Up to 100,000 people, the biggest turnout since the protests against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, demanded reform to permit direct popular election of the prime minister.

The country has been in crisis since the Labor-Likud coalition dissolved in March, with a procession of backroom deals aimed at establishing a new government scandalizing the country. Israel has been subjected to a process in which tiny religious parties have demanded large government grants to their sectarian schools and other projects in exchange for political support. One splinter faction, in exchange for its votes, demanded that the Likud bloc guarantee the terms of the pact with a \$2.5 million bank note.

The demonstration included broad representation from various political factions, and was sparked by a hunger strike undertaken by two Army veterans outside the Knesset (Parliament) building 10 days before. Since then, the number of hunger strikers has swelled to the dozens, and 70,000 Israelis have signed petitions supporting the reform.

Euro-Parliament votes appeasement on Lithuania

The European Parliament on April 5 passed a resolution on Lithuania which follows the "Neville Chamberlain" appeasement line of George Bush and Margaret Thatcher. Acknowledging the March 11 decision of the Lithuanian Parliament to declare independence, the reaction of the Soviet leadership to this, and the movement of Soviet troops in Lithuania, the statement "reaffirms that the right to self-determination in Europe must not lead to a renaissance of nationalism."

It then "invites the Soviet authorities, as

well as those of the Republic of Lithuania, to open a process of constructive dialogue," in the context of the Helsinki Accords and in view of the upcoming Helsinki II conference.

This is only the latest indication of the rotten record of Europe, with the partial exception of Denmark, on the Lithuania question. While the most egregious case is Mrs. Thatcher's Britain, not one European government has recognized free Lithuania.

'Sophisticated KGB operation' in Lithuania

Former British Foreign Secretary Dr. David Owen says that a "sophisticated KGB operation" is unfolding in Lithuania, and takes Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to task for backing up Gorbachov at all costs. In a commentary published in the *Daily Express* of London on April 6, Owen, a Social Democrat, points out that Mikhail Gorbachov himself is a KGB product, who "did not arrive suddenly out of nowhere in Britain at the end of 1984 as 'someone we could do business with.'"

Gorbachov is out to increase the power of a "KGB-dominated oligarchy" in the Soviet Union, Owen states. "Mr. Gorbachov is a product of a serious power elite in Moscow that had its origins in the international section of the KGB in the late 1970s. That KGB elite took power in November 1982 when Yuri Andropov, head of the KGB for 15 years, became General Secretary. . . .

"Installed as President with all his new executive powers, the KGB has in Gorbachov a far more effective vehicle for control than ever the Communist Party provided with its cumbersome Politburo decision-making."

According to Owen, "What we have witnessed in Moscow over the last decade is a transfer of power from the Communist Party under Brezhnev to the KGB. Gorbachov is now the most important player, but he is part of the deliberate strategy of managed dissent and managed democracy as the tools for achieving and holding power. It is not power for the people but power for a

KGB-dominated oligarchy.

"We are witnessing in Lithuania the start of a reassertion of centralized discipline. . . . The Soviet occupation of Lithuania is illegal. It is a Hitler-Stalin war crime."

French conclude deal to free hostages

Three European hostages held by radical Palestinians were freed in Muslim West Beirut on April 10, in exchange for French Mirage jets. Witnesses said the Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) handed Frenchwoman Jacqueline Valente, 31, her Belgian boyfriend Fernand Houtekins, 42, and their baby daughter Sophie to officials at the French embassy.

The FRC, led by Abu Nidal, who is termed by the United States one of the world's most wanted men, said the previous week that the three captives would be freed in response to an appeal by Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, and after fruitful contacts with the French government.

Palestinian sources in Beirut told Reuters that the hostages were freed as part of a deal between France and Libya which involved Paris supplying Libya with three Mirage war planes. The delivery of the planes was a breach of a 1986 European Community embargo. "Their release is part of the war planes deal," a senior Palestinian source said.

In Paris, the Foreign Ministry said that "this happy event is the outcome of the April 4 appeal and efforts of Colonel Qaddafi."

Soviets, Arafat see war coming in Mideast

In an interview published in the Italian daily *Il Giornale* on April 3, Soviet First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Yuli Vorontsov said that the risk of a new conflict in the Middle East is "not very far away and could

Briefly

be a new kind of war. In that region the weapons have changed dangerously: missiles, nuclear means."

Vorontsov said that accusations that Iraq has nuclear bombs are false, but that Israel does have them. Vorontsov identified the big inflow of Soviet Jews into the West Bank as a danger. "We are against that, and . . . if Israel insists, it can go as far as provoking a military conflict. . . . It is clearly a plan, and the other element of the plan is a confrontation with the Arabs."

The following day, Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat, in an interview published in the Italian newspaper *Avvenire*, charged even more specifically that Israel is planning a new war. "They rejected all the peace initiatives," he said, "Resolution 161 of the U.N.O., the Palestinians' initiative, the French-Soviet one, the Egyptian 10-point one, and even the Baker plan. What other possibilities are there? They are increasing their military power in all fields: They have 200 nuclear bombs, besides chemical and conventional weapons."

Arafat also spoke of the danger represented by the inflow of 300,000 Russian Jews every year into the occupied territories. At this rate, he said, by the year 2000, some 3 million Jews will have entered Israel, especially from the U.S.S.R., the Eastern European countries, and Ethiopia. "This corresponds to the Greater Israel plan, as it appears on the 10 agorot coin, minted in Israel in 1989," he said. On that coin, Israel is shown according to an ancient map that includes most of Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, a part of Egypt, and all of Jordan.

Marshal Ogarkov opposes German reunification

Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the most influential of Soviet strategic planners, declared himself to be not "indifferent" to events taking place in Germany, in an interview published on the front page of the Soviet military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* during the first week of April.

Adopting a high public profile in his new capacity as chairman of the Soviet All-Union Council of Veterans of War, Labor, and the Armed Forces, Ogarkov spoke about "the social and political power of the veterans' movement." The "tens of millions" of veterans, he said, are the people in the Soviet Union "with a clear position . . . guardians and bearers of the revolutionary, combat and labor traditions of the Soviet people."

Talking about the political activation of veterans around the upcoming 45th anniversary of VE Day, Ogarkov stressed that "we veterans, and all Soviet people, are far from indifferent to the processes taking place today in Europe, especially in the German states."

On March 3, *Krasnaya Zvezda* had printed a tirade from the veterans' council, opposing German reunification as an attempt to build a "German Europe" instead of a "Common European Home," as Gorbachov wants.

Iraq denies intent to use chemical weapons

The government of Iraq on April 9 said that it was expelling an American diplomat, in a further sign of worsening relations with the West, but tried to counter Israeli fears that it would attack Israel with chemical weapons.

The official Iraqi news agency INA said Baghdad was expelling the unidentified U.S. diplomat in retaliation for Washington's expulsion of an Iraqi diplomat based at the United Nations the week before.

INA quoted President Saddam Hussein as saying that his country's intentions were peaceful and that his threat to burn half of Israel with chemical weapons was in response to Israeli threats. "Any weapon we possess . . . would not be used but for self-defense. . . . Peace is a fixed slogan in our policy and in our program," he was quoted.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the main bridge between the Arabs, Israel, and the West, met with Saddam Hussein in Baghdad two days before, in a bid to calm Middle East tensions.

● **LECH WALES**A announced he would run for the office of Polish President, and an aide said the Solidarnosc leader was ready to force President Wojciech Jaruzelski to resign. Asked by the official news agency PAP to comment on a statement by one of his senior collaborators that he wanted to replace Jaruzelski soon, Walesa said, "I confirm."

● **THAI AND BURMESE** government officials on April 9 signed an agreement to establish a regional border committee to coordinate security along their 2,000-kilometer border.

● **BRITISH** Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd called himself a successor of Viscount Castlereagh, in an interview with the *Independent* April 4. Hurd, who is being mooted as a successor to Margaret Thatcher, said that after the defeat of Napoleon, Castlereagh "had to put together a Concert of Europe, as we are now putting together a Concert of Europe. . . . We have to find a way of creating European structures which don't humiliate Gorbachov. Just as Castlereagh had to do it in a way which didn't humiliate the French."

● **SOUTH KOREA** on April 4 announced its formal agreement to the U.S. plan to cut 7,000 of the 43,000 U.S. troops stationed there by 1993. The defense ministry said the troops would be withdrawn in 1990-93, and that then the two countries will review the situation to decide whether to make more cuts in 1994-95.

● **ALGIS CEKUOTIS**, foreign affairs adviser to Lithuanian President Landsbergis, said recently that British government fears that Gorbachov might be toppled by a "hardliner" if it recognizes Lithuania show a lack of understanding of the situation in the Soviet Union. "There is no need to remove Gorbachov, because a hardliner is already at the wheel of the country."