

Major Saudi Coverage Shows LaRouche Role

by Hussein Askary

In the week following the Aug. 5 *Washington Post* exposé of secret Washington briefings in which Richard Perle's war faction targeted Saudi Arabia as an "enemy of the United States," Saudi press carried much coverage of the "other American leadership," Lyndon LaRouche.

The London-based Saudi daily *Asharq Al-Awsat*, the world's largest Arabic business daily, on Aug. 12 published a comprehensive review by Iqbal Al-Qazwini (an Iraqi citizen living in Germany) of LaRouche's Eurasian Land-Bridge as the strategy to save the world economy from the current crisis, and on Helga Zepp-LaRouche's election campaign for Chancellor in Germany as a turning point for that country's political history. That same day, one of the largest national dailies inside Saudi Arabia, *Al-Watan*, published an op-ed, "Conversations with Lyndon LaRouche on the Most Dangerous Issues of the World," by Dr. Ahmed Al-Kedidi, former Tunisian diplomat and current professor at the University of Qatar.

And *Al-Watan* for Aug. 9 had featured an article by *EIR*'s Jeffrey Steinberg which anticipated on the immediate breaking development noted by the Saudi foreign minister in a U.S. interview. Steinberg gave LaRouche's assessment of Richard Perle's outlook toward the U.S. military as a "Night of the Long Knives."

'What Is Special About LaRouche'

Iqbal Al-Qazwini's article, "The Eurasian Landbridge, a Silk Road for New Development," opens by saying: "Calls for a new financial system have increased in recent years, in order to face the economic and financial collapse around the world." She cites examples of the "two-decades collapse of the American real economy."

"One of the most prominent advocates of a new system is the economist and politician Lyndon LaRouche, a candidate for the 2004 Presidential elections. He believes that the solution is to finance a gigantic project of building a land-bridge connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe, as a new Silk Road. LaRouche's ideas have come under greater light recently, after the outbreak of the financial scandals and the bankruptcy wave among major U.S. corporations," she added. After reviewing features of the crisis in terms of LaRouche's Triple Curve function, she added: "From a reading of the hard reality, which augurs catastrophe, LaRouche and his *Executive Intelligence Review* came to the idea of building a system of Eurasian transport networks."

Al-Qazwini also referred to the internal political-economic paradox and the turmoil inside the United States, Britain, and Israel, the three imperial powers that want to wage a war against the world. She emphasized that the Middle East would be the pivot and a connecting point for all continents on the new development road, if correct economic policies are adopted. "What is special about LaRouche is his view of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is diametrically different from any other views, because he denounces the fascist policies of the Israeli army against the Palestinians." Moreover, she continued, "LaRouche, in his political work inside the U.S., exposes not merely the Zionist lobby, but also those he calls the fanatic Christian Zionists. His institution also published a book on the lies around Sept. 11 and their dangerous consequences. The authors of the book try to prove that powerful elements from within the U.S. government might be involved in these events, considering these events an internal coup d'état."

The last part of the article is dedicated to Helga Zepp-LaRouche's German election campaign. "What remains to be said, is that LaRouche's ideas and those of his institution are the backbone of the political program of a German party calling itself 'Citizens Rights Movement Solidarity.' This party is preparing to participate in the coming elections. It is headed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the writer and political activist, and also wife of the American economist. Mrs. LaRouche and her party are unique in dealing with the situation in the Middle East with a truthfulness which German citizens have not been used to—the German citizens who have been told and reared since Germany lost the war to be cautious, and even to be afraid of saying anything critical about anything Israeli or Jewish, lest they be called anti-Semites."

Al-Qazwini concluded her article: "If this party enters the German parliament, Germany will have passed a major stage in its post-World War II history, and would have to rise to a new and active role in shaping world politics. Today, the world stands at a crossroads. Probably, these proposed economic projects could become the first material nucleus for a dialogue among civilizations, which can pave the way upon which the human society could march towards true peace. Arab and Islamic civilization, which has been acknowledged and accredited in history as a bridge between the Greek civilization and the European Renaissance, could, if it wanted to, resume its prominent position and contribute to changing its current condition and build a future of dignity for its peoples."

'The Most Dangerous Issues'

Dr. Ahmed Kedidi described his "Conversations with LaRouche on the Most Dangerous Issues," in the first of three articles in *Al-Watan*. "I found my friend as I had left him" in 1984, Kedidi wrote, "lively, enthusiastic and with the same alert looks, despite the 80 years of age which he will celebrate in September. I asked him about the drumbeats that have

been sounding from the U.S. to attack Iraq.” The author cited LaRouche’s answers, from the collapse of the financial-economic system, the financial oligarchy controlling the drumbeat for war, and their plans for redrawing the whole map of the Middle East; also Senators McCain and Lieberman’s role as mouthpieces for the oligarchy; and finally the intellectual ground for the Clash of Civilizations and war party as represented by Brzezinski, Kissinger, and Huntington.

Kedidi gave LaRouche’s view of the objective behind the Sept. 11 attacks as pushing the United States into a war against Islam, from Iraq to Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and so forth. “The result of these wars, according to the war party, would be the destruction of the new bridges being built among China, India, Russia, and Pakistan, and to isolate Central Asia and reshape the Middle East.”

Kedidi cites LaRouche, “The world today urgently needs an international development based on a community of principle, the which I have been fighting for for half a century. The world today is divided between developed and rich nations with a small population, and populated poor nations . . . this is a ‘molotov cocktail’ ready to explode. . . . And, unfortunately, those hawks are trying to light the wick.”

Steinberg’s analysis for *Al Watan*, written before the “get Saudi Arabia” Pentagon briefing was exposed, was entitled, “Heads Will Roll, but Whose Heads?” It described the frustration of Defense Policy Board members over American military leaders’ opposition to their planned war on Iraq, opposition that includes the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. “The members of the DPB threatened that ‘many heads would have to roll’ in order to ignite the war against Iraq,” Steinberg reported.

“Lyndon LaRouche,” Steinberg wrote, “announced that Richard Perle’s behavior and that of the members of the DPB reminded him of the Adolf Hitler’s circles, who targeted German military leaders for liquidation who were opposed to Hitler’s crazy war plans. General von Schleicher, who was German Chancellor before Hitler’s election in 1933, was actually assassinated by the Nazi Party due to his public opposition to the Nazi war propaganda. LaRouche asked: ‘Are Perle and his friends proposing to assassinate American military leaders?’”

Steinberg gave many examples of the growing opposition inside the U.S. military against the proposed war against Iraq, and that they prefer the continuation of the “containment policy.” He cited warnings that a war against Iraq now would create a series of grave crises in many parts of the world, especially in the Islamic and Arab states. He concluded the article, describing the nightmare of the top U.S. military leadership—Ariel Sharon. “The military leaders are convinced that Sharon is against any peace plan, and that he would find the first excuse to trigger a war in the region, in order to justify the forced transfer of 2-3 million Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan. Sharon would start that war the minute the U.S. starts its military operations against Iraq. The



Lyndon LaRouche was widely covered not only in Saudi Arabia in early August, but elsewhere in the Mideast as well; here, Turkey’s Yarin newspaper carried several analyses by LaRouche associates in one issue.

coincidence of the U.S. attack against Iraq, and Israel’s war against Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians, would convince the Arab and Muslim world that the U.S. and Israeli are conspiring against Islam.”

Steinberg’s conclusion went to the heart of the U.S. leadership fight, in which LaRouche is centrally engaged, and which vitally concerns *Al Watan*’s readers: “Richard Perle and his cohorts at the Defense Policy Board were right when they said that ‘heads will have to roll.’ Far better that it is their heads that roll, and that President Bush stands up to the pressures of these lunatics.”

New Rabin Option For Israel, or Another War?

by Dean Andromidas

Haifa mayor Amram Mitzna's newly-announced challenge for the leadership of Israel's Labor Party represents a desperate attempt to bring together a pro-peace opposition to head off Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's new Middle East war. At a press conference in Tel Aviv on Aug. 13, Mitzna declared that Sharon "is leading us to a disaster. Nothing he is doing on security and economic issues is getting us anywhere. That's why so many citizens have lost all hope. . . . There is no time to lose. We must, without delay or preconditions, start talks with the Palestinians, so that the two sides can return to the path of peace."

Mitzna, a retired general of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)—as was Labor Party Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, killed in 1995—is committed to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which would include turning over all of the Gaza Strip and 95% of the West Bank to the Palestinians, and even uprooting some of the Jewish settlements, if necessary. He calls it impossible that the Israel invests "20 times" more in the settlements than in other development towns.

The former soldier supports unilateral withdrawal: "If there is no partner, then we will have to take unilateral steps for security separation. A unilateral move is obviously less good than a peace agreement, but it would bring us security separation and a security border. The world will then have to advance Palestinian society, and a new diplomatic horizon and peace agreement will be the eventual result." This relative sanity is Mitzna's alternative to "force, more force, and more force" in the conflict with the Palestinians. But he promised not to let up in the battle against terror. "We will continue to strike at terror and to use every means to destroy it."

By changing Israel's security situation from Sharon's disastrous war-making, Mitzna wants to "bring back foreign investors, tourists, and to get the wheels of the Israeli economy turning again. . . . As someone who cares deeply about the country's future, I decided I could no longer wait on the side while it falls through our hands. The security situation is getting worse every day. Every day, more people are losing their jobs, there are more people with less food in their refrigerators, and more people have nothing to look forward to."

Sharon Government's War-Fever Campaign

Although elections are not scheduled until November 2003, that date could be moved up to next January, as Sharon's



*New Labor Party
leadership candidate
Amram Mitzna.*

government could collapse if the Knesset (parliament) votes down the 2003 budget in October. On Nov. 19, the Labor Party will hold its primaries to determine its leadership and Prime Minister candidate. Mitzna is being seen as a welcome alternative to current Party Chairman and Israeli Defense Minister, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, who shares Sharon's waistline and his hard-line policies. New polls show that Mitzna could get 52% of the Labor Party primary votes.

On Aug. 13, when Mitzna announced his candidacy, Sharon and his generals launched a propaganda campaign aimed at preparing the Israeli population for military—including nuclear—strikes against Iraq. The government initiated a debate, with banner headlines in the Israel press, on the need for mass smallpox inoculation of the entire population, in case Iraq fires biological weapons of mass destruction. The Defense Ministry has announced the mass distribution of Lugol's Iodine tablets for protection against radiation poisoning, in case of a "dirty nuclear bomb" attack. Wild allegations are being made that Iraq could be financing "mega-terror" attacks to come, by Palestinian organizations.

Israeli commentator Meron Benvenisti, in *Ha'aretz* on Aug. 15, exposed Sharon's real intentions. "Fanning anxiety with reports of 'Home Front readiness' are not about 'defensive' measures. They are about declarations by the Sharon government that 'this time Israel will certainly respond to any Iraqi attack.' The worse the hysterical fear of an NBC attack . . . the more pressure will rise to 'stick it' to Saddam Hussein, whether it is necessary or not. . . . The warnings about the destructive ramifications of an attack on Iraq for the entire Middle East are not deterring Israel—they are encouraging it. . . . An American assault on Iraq and an Israeli involvement, even if only symbolic, leads to the collapse of the Hashemite regime in Jordan. Israel executes the old 'Jordanian option'—expelling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians across the Jordan River." Benvenisti concluded that America should be "warned that an assault on Iraq could unleash ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. Nobody should be allowed to say they weren't warned."

Growing Support for New Alternative

Support for Mitzna has come from key Labor leaders, including Tel Aviv mayor Ron Huldai; Culture and Science Minister Matan Vilnai, also a retired General; Yossi Katz, an important Labor party Knesset member from Haifa; and northern Israel party boss Yisrael Savyon. Even Yossi Beilin, the architect of the Oslo accords, said that Haim Ramon, the other party candidate, would most likely pull out of the race and support Mitzna. One of Labor's founding fathers, 96-year-old Yitzhak Ben Aharon, declared his support: "If we are able to present a clear candidate who speaks from the heart and who people can believe can be counted on, it will only strengthen the country." Ben Aharon, who had been a minister in David Ben-Gurion's 1960s government, had announced his resignation from the party, declaring that it had lost its way by joining Sharon's government. He pronounced Ben-Eliezer and Ramon "not the people who are able to turn over a new leaf with regard to Israeli society and our relations with the outside world."

One senior Israeli peace camp leader told *EIR* that it is too early to be over-optimistic, since it is not clear that Mitzna could beat Sharon or the other Likud front-runner, Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu. But he added, "Even if he doesn't win, a real opposition is finally forming. . . . Everyone is talking about Mitzna, and the right wing is totally freaked out." Those backing Mitzna not only want to start talks with the Palestinians, but are very nervous about an Iraq war. This nervousness is being felt in the military-security establishment.

A senior military source who knows Mitzna told *EIR* of "The Mitzna Affair" of 1982 during the Lebanon War. At a meeting of senior Israeli military officers convened by then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon at Paratrooper House, Amram Mitzna stood up and called upon Sharon to resign because of his handling of the war. "You have to be pretty courageous to do something like that," the source said. Mitzna resigned from the IDF in 1982, over Sharon's speech denouncing the formation of a commission of inquiry into the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon. But Mitzna's resignation was not accepted by the Chief of Staff, despite Sharon's demand that he be cashiered; instead, Sharon was thrown out of the government and declared unfit to ever be Defense Minister again. Sharon has not forgotten "The Mitzna affair," nor has he forgiven Mitzna.

The 'Intifada General'

Although Mitzna was close to slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, he is not well liked by former Prime Minister Ehud Barak. In February 2001, a few days before Barak resigned as Prime Minister, Mitzna wrote an open letter demanding that Barak leave office. This followed Barak's fiasco at Camp David, and his attempt to invite Sharon into a national unity government.

Mitzna was called the "Intifada general," because he commanded Israeli troops in the West Bank in 1987, during the

first Intifada. Criticized at the time by the right as too soft, and by the left as too hard-line, Mitzna resigned as commander in 1989 after a search-and-arrest mission led to the death of four Palestinians and the wounding of 12 others.

Israel needs a leader who can not only pull together left and right, but who can also bridge the gap between secular and ultra-Orthodox. He must also address the desperate needs of Israel's Arab community, caught between a rock and a hard place since the beginning of the Intifada. Having been Mayor of Haifa, Israel's third-largest city, for almost ten years, Mitzna may well be prepared for this task. Haifa is unique, in that it is an important port and industrial center and a Labor party stronghold, and represents a cross-section of Israeli society, with secular and Orthodox Jews and a large Arab population. As mayor, Mitzna has forged a coalition that includes the Labor party, the religious parties, and Hadash, the pro-communist and overwhelmingly Arab political movement. He even has support from city councilmen from the Likud.

But winning Labor Party leadership will be easier than beating Sharon or Netanyahu. While Sharon is responsible for the horrendous security situation—with now over 600 Israelis having been killed, mostly civilians—the polls say that Sharon's Likud party is expected beat Labor by a considerable margin. Nonetheless, if Mitzna replaces Ben-Eliezer as head of the party, "They will have a choice," says one leader. This source pointed that Mitzna's connection between the need for peace, and reviving the collapsing Israeli economy, is crucial, including regional economic projects.

In the coming weeks, Mitzna's candidacy will be intersecting a social explosion caused by the impoverishment of broad sections of the population, which Sharon's war and killer budget will make even worse. In September, during the month of all the important Jewish holidays, the media will be filled with stories of how thousands of Israelis will not be able to buy all the special food for the celebrations. Thus, when the Knesset reconvenes in October to debate the killer budget, says this source, "there'll be a social explosion; it will be just too much for people to bear."

A senior member of the peace camp cautioned that Sharon, with the backing of the war party in Washington, may launch his war before Israel goes to elections. And if war is forestalled, can Mitzna succeed, where Rabin lost his life, challenging the right wing, the settlement enterprise, and the fascist ideology it is premised on? His chances of success here depends a great deal on what happens in Washington.

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Sharon's 'Squadristi' Launch Anti-Arab Pogrom

by Dean Andromidas

Radical Israeli settlers, the fascist *squadristi* of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, have begun to launch anti-Palestinian pogroms. On July 28 in the West Bank city of Hebron, Jewish settlers ran riot throughout the city, which was under strict curfew, firing Army-issued M-14 assault rifles, breaking into Palestinians' homes, destroying cars, and looting shops. A 14-year-old Palestinian girl was shot dead and her brother wounded when the settlers fired indiscriminately into Palestinian homes. Even Israeli soldiers and police were brutally assaulted when they tried to bring the riot under control.

The rampage occurred during the funeral march for a soldier, Elazar Liebowitz, who had been killed in a Palestinian attack two days before. Liebowitz had been a resident in one of the Jewish enclaves in Hebron, one of the West Bank's largest cities. These enclaves, along with the settlement of Kiryat Arba just outside the city, are the center of the most radical fascist settlers. It is from here that Dr. Baruch Goldstein, in 1994, killed at least 26 Palestinians at a mosque, and these were the same settlers who helped incite Yigal Amir to assassinate Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

'No Provocation From the Palestinians'

An eyewitness report by Col. (res.) Moshe Givati, an adviser to Public Security Minister Uzi Landau, in the daily *Ha'aretz*, was hair-raising. He called the riot "a pogrom against the Arabs of Hebron, with no provocation on the Palestinian side." He had attended the funeral in his capacity as liaison between the settlers and the Ministry of Public Security.

Givati said that violence began when a group of Jewish youths invaded a Palestinian house in the city and burned and vandalized its possessions. Police and border patrol arrested three youths, including two of the dead soldier's brothers.

Givati said that "there were 20 or 30 people, who were mostly not from Hebron," and that he suspected the thugs were from outposts in the area of Itamar and Yitzhar. "For some reason they were all carrying Army-issue weapons, and they charged into the Palestinian houses. That's when the fracas began. I saw everything from very close range. There were long bursts of fire by the Israelis—into the air and at the houses. . . . Dozens of thugs, including youths from Hebron, burst into Arab houses for no reason. They broke windows,

destroyed property, and threw stones. These people were there for the purpose of making a pogrom. . . . Police officers were beaten." In Givati's view, the police and Army "were too restrained. Considering the events, much more force should have been used. We cannot allow such harm to the rule of law. It's inconceivable that soldiers and police be cursed that way."

Colonel Givati's rage against these settlers is not unique; the vast majority of Israelis see these particular settlers as the murderers of Prime Minister Rabin. Givati was dismissed as commander of the Hebron Brigade at the end of the 1980s, because he was using helicopters to hunt down Palestinians, in the same way that poachers hunt down wild animals in Africa. But for Givati and others on the right, the "rule of law" reserves such operations for the military and the state. If Sharon's *squadristi* are allowed to run rampant, then the whole facade of the "legality" of official Israeli actions would collapse.

This does not say that these thugs are not supported by official circles. On the contrary, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) high command, which was in charge of securing the funeral march in conjunction with the settlers, seems to have played an ambiguous role.

"The Israeli forces in the field are prepared to defend the Jewish settlement area from attacks by the Palestinians, but they find it difficult to defend those that the Jews themselves attack," a senior commander in Hebron was quoted saying. Not one settler has been charged in this riot, even though Israeli police officers and soldiers had been brutally beaten.

U.S. Official's Step-Son Beaten

Another reason for Givati's outrage could be because of the diplomatic fallout caused by this anti-Arab pogrom, especially given that one of the victims was Benjamin Lowry, the step-son of U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Dov Zakheim. Lowry was a photographer who was in Hebron at the time, working on a project on life in mixed cities. According to a report in the Aug. 1 *Ha'aretz*, "Lowry was on the edges of the funeral procession when two kippa-wearing thugs walked up to him and forbade him to photograph. Lowry didn't manage to get a word out when a fist landed in his face and one of his valuable cameras was ripped from his neck and smashed to pieces. An [Israeli] policeman who tried to get him into one of the alleyways, out of trouble, ran for his own life when a dozen settlers joined in on the rumble against the photographer. Lowry was knocked to the ground, kicked in the ribs and head. Someone grabbed the camera straps around his neck and began strangling him." He was eventually rescued when soldiers arrived.

It is not clear whether Zakheim will tell his colleagues at the Pentagon, such as Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, a promoter of a Clash of Civilizations, "a thing or two about a kind of terror that the conservatives in the building probably know nothing about," as *Ha'aretz* put it.



From the “lunatic fringe” which murdered Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995—the crime against the Israeli nation for which the responsible forces have never been investigated or punished—fascist crimes are now being committed which appall even IDF generals, and threaten the breakdown of society.

The Sharon Connection

These fanatics are often referred to as the “lunatic fringe,” and even the broader settlers movement often distances itself from them. But this is a dangerous assumption. This was underscored by Yoel Marcus, in *Ha'aretz* on Aug. 2 in a commentary entitled “A Green Light for the Next Murder.” “These people,” he wrote, “the likes of whom we also saw this week in Hebron, running wild and coming to blows with Israeli policemen, go from funeral to funeral spreading fear and panic, and most of all hatred. They are referred to as the ‘lunatic fringe,’ but in practice, they set the tone. They terrorize the state and their impact on the national atmosphere threatens Israel’s democratic character.”

Reminding his readers of the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, Marcus wrote, “The atmosphere of today is even more poisoned than it was in the last month of Rabin’s life. The poster of Rabin in an SS uniform held aloft at Zion Square; the non-stop personal incitements of Prof. Hillel Weiss of the Professors for a Strong Israel who explored the possibility of prosecuting Rabin as a traitor—in the end, all produced a murderer.” Marcus concluded that it is intolerable that “this minority should infect an entire nation with its messianic disease, and use freedom of expression and the weakness of the law enforcement system to give a green light for the next murder.”

Sharon’s squadristi are ideologically controlled by a network of extremist fascist rabbis such as Moshe Levinger, founder of the radical settlers movement Gush Emunim. Levinger is the founder and resident rabbi at the Hebron settlements. His son was arrested in April for participating in an

attempt to bomb a Palestinian girls school (see “Jewish Terror Plot in East Jerusalem,” *EIR*, May 31, 2002). Levinger worked closely with Sharon for over three decades, building settlements inside the occupied territories.

Sharon controls this grouping through his man on the scene, Ze’ev Hever, whom he refers to as “my friend, Zambish.” In December 2001, Sharon presented Hever with the “Menachem Begin Award.” They meet several times a week to discuss the Jewish settlements, a practice they have kept for over 15 years.

In 1982, Hever was sent to prison as a member of the infamous Jewish Underground terrorist organization, which targeted Palestinian political figures for assassination. One of its members, an Air Force pilot, was arrested in the 1980s for planning to destroy the al-Haram, al-Sharif/Temple Mount by flying a plane full of explosives into one of Islam’s most holy sites, the al-Aqsa Mosque, atop al-Haram

al-Sharif. Hever spent 11 months in prison for attempted murder, after he and his accomplices tried to plant a bomb under the car of a member of the Palestinian National Guidance Committee. He lives in the Kiryat Arba settlement, outside of Hebron, which was home to mass-murderer Baruch Goldstein. This settlement is the headquarters of the so-called lunatic fringe.

Hever is a religious Zionist and close to Rabbi Levinger. While the latter is of the first generation of Israeli fascists, Hever, 48 years old, is of the second, and is now responsible for the rising third generation, which conducted the pogrom in Hebron. He is the secretary general of Amana, the settlement arm of Gush Emunim, and is responsible for all the illegal settlement activity. According to media reports, nothing happens in the settlements unless Hever approves. This includes all the so-called outposts, which are manned by the lunatic fringe. Forty-four of these outposts have been created since Sharon came to power.

Danny Yatom, former head of the Mossad, told *Ha'aretz*, “If you don’t pay attention, he builds new roads without authorization of the head of Central Command, and if he doesn’t get authorization, he tries to create facts on the ground.”

Although Hever is said to stay in the shadows, he is the most powerful leader on the Yesha Council of settlements. Uri Elizut, the editor of *Nekuda*, the journal of the Yesha Council, told *Ha'aretz* on July 12, “When he speaks, everyone listens quietly.”

Selling to the Enemy

Only a few weeks before the pogrom, Israeli authorities

arrested a network of soldiers who sold over 50,000 rounds of ammunition to Palestinian militants. The soldiers were from the settlements of Adura and Telem, also outside of Hebron. These settlements were initiated by Sharon in 1982, who deployed members of Betar, a right-wing organization linked to the Sharon's Likud party, to occupy them. The Adura settlement was the site of a Palestinian attack earlier this year, which left three settlers dead and several wounded.

Some of the arrested soldiers were indicted for driving Palestinian vehicles through Israeli checkpoints for \$20 a vehicle. Did those vehicles contain explosives or suicide bombers?

Those arrested were all reservists or on active duty, including one major, and were from elite units, including the paratroopers. One was a member of the Border Patrol. Their arrest reportedly sent shock waves throughout the settlements, as it is possible that Israelis who have been killed or wounded could have been hit with ammunition supplied by members of the same settlements.

One obvious implication of this case is that Israeli extremists, starting with Sharon, are encouraging Palestinian violence for their own political purposes. Sharon provokes Hamas to undertake terror attacks, and when he came to power, he told the settlers, "Israel will do things that we will never admit to" in order to crush the Palestinians.

It has not been learned whether those arrested are linked

to Sharon's squadristi; the details of the cases are still under wraps. Nonetheless, the case reflects the intense corruption and criminality that is spreading throughout Israeli society as a result of Sharon's war of attrition. One Israeli intelligence source pointed to the degeneration of Israeli society because of the war and impoverishment. "Under these conditions, where we have one of the most corrupt governments ever, people will begin doing things like this. Look, if you're unemployed, \$20 for driving a car through a checkpoint is a lot of money."

This is reflected in the two settlements themselves. Both are inhabited by who support Sharon's hard-line policies. Some were still suffering from the wounds of previous Palestinian attacks. Yet these two settlements, like many others, are on the verge of collapse, not because of the security situation, but because economically they are failures. Most of the residents have left, and are seeking work within Israel proper. Those who remain, have jobs that are related to maintaining the settlements, such as municipal and medical workers, and are subsidized by the government. Most of the young people, who see no future in "settling the land" of Greater Israel, have also left.

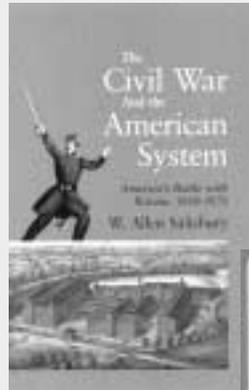
Unless Sharon is stopped, the situation can only get worse. In the shadow of an American attack on Iraq, Sharon will deploy his army and squadristi to force all the Palestinians out of the West Bank.

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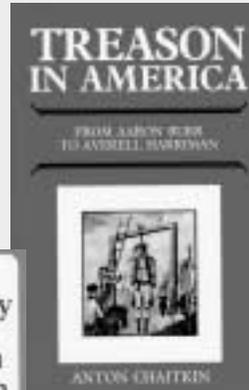
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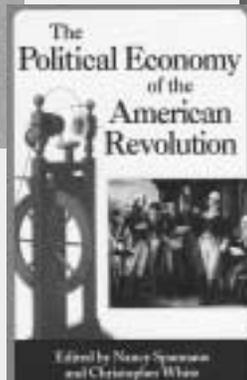
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