

consequent Israeli casualties.) On the other hand, the Labor Party has always been careful to hide its own terrorist credentials under a cloak of social democracy and state authority. Thus, it eagerly seized on the question of the «Jewish underground» as ammunition against the Likud.

3. On February 9th, Sharon publicly announced his intention to be Herut's candidate for prime minister. Thus, he flagrantly disregarded the need for Likud's unity behind Shamir at a time when the government's popularity was dropping sharply and the spectre of early elections was already in the air. Actually, Sharon's announcement was a signal that he wanted to regain the defense portfolio, as also indicated by his vocal criticism of Arens' policy in Lebanon. When it came to a vote in Herut's Central Committee, Sharon drew 41% as opposed to Shamir's 56%, showing that he is a force to be reckoned with.

The Arens-Sharon rivalry over whose policy is more effective, could be one reason why investigations began of veterans of Unit 101, the notorious terror squad formed by Sharon in the IDF during the fifties. Shamir and Arens eyed a chance to serve warning to Sharon and his militant followers, while at the same time whitewashing their own terrorist records. It is noteworthy that Arens was the only minister to express full support to the Karp report, which covers a period when Sharon was responsible for the 1967 occupied territories.

## The big terrorists go free

Most important, however, was giving the Likud as a whole a whitewash before the July 23rd elections. With the crackdown on a small part of Zionism's terror squads, the Likud is competing with Labor for respectability in the eyes of the world and, more important, in the eyes of those Israelis that cannot face the fact that Zionism equals terrorism. In this context, we note that the Reagan administration made a statement on the May indictments, a matter which would normally be considered an internal Israeli affair not calling for overseas response. The US affirmed that «the government of Israel and Shamir is already on record as being opposed to terrorism».

With the above we do not intend to reduce the recent crackdown to a scenario preplanned for the election campaign; nor will the question of Zionist terrorism disappear after July 23rd. At the heart of the matter lie much bigger questions. Inasmuch as the foregoing consolidation of the right in Israeli politics is the logical consequence of the development of the Israeli state, the crisis for the Likud's rule is symptomatic of Zionism's overall crisis.

In an attempt to hold on to state power, the Likud was forced to take measures which may put strains on the rightist alliance and cause friction with its own constituency. A poll published in the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* in February, showed that fully 19% of Israelis support terror against Arabs. Likud risks antagonizing the militant settler movement which provides the vanguard for its pet project: annexation of the 1967 occupied territories.

## Added US contribution to terror and settlements

Among those indicted for anti-Arab terror are recently immigrated US citizens. This directs attention to the fact that «The US has become Israel's principal supplier of immigrants», according to *Newsweek* magazine, June 4th. As of now only about 10% of the settlers in the West Bank came from the US, but their numbers have doubled in the past three years, pointing to a significant trend. The increase in US citizens immigrating to the Zionist state is due to the fact that the Jewish Agency's immigration program has been reinforced by Gush Emunim's direct recruitment to settlements in the name of 'Eretz Israel'. Like the Likud generally, these settlers rely on religious pretexts for their colonization and regard the West Bank as the heart of 'Greater Israel', to which non-Jews have no rights. Unlike the Americans who have immigrated to within the pre-67 borders of the Zionist state, the drop-out rate of these new settlers is very low. They are becoming a significant component of the settler population and thus constitute a new form of US aid to Zionist expansionism. It is striking that most of them retain their US citizenship.

## Fascism above and under ground

The other bigger issue is related to what 'left' Zionists have long been warning: the danger of fascism in 'Israel' and/or a military takeover. Of course, fascist practices have always been used against Palestinians, and the Israeli state is already highly militarized. What is new is growing public awareness that the Zionist right is prepared to violate Israeli law which is supposedly designed to protect Jews, and even to harm Jews as well as Palestinians. The February 1983 killing of Emil Gruenzweig and the injury of ten other Peace Now demonstrators shocked many Israelis. Those who view 'Israel' as an alternative to fascism's persecution of Jews in Europe, feel uncomfortable with statements like those of Gush Emunim leader Levinger: «The Jewish national renaissance is more important than democracy. The fate of the land of Israel and a free and whole Jewish life in it are not subject to majority vote.»

The tendency to narrow Israeli pseudodemocracy, even for Jews, is nowadays often expressed even in the Knesset. On May 30th, Knesset member Cohen Avidov challenged the right of Mothers against Silence to demonstrate against the war in Lebanon. A few days earlier, he had declared at a Gush Emunim rally: «We have to tear out the eyes and guts of the Arabs».

The growing fascist tendencies in the Zionist state will not be halted by the arrest of the so-called underground. On the contrary, the crackdown on one branch of Zionist terror is a prelude to incorporating their tasks into the state's prerogatives, i.e. more institutionalized repression against Palestinians in particular, but also to be used against 'troublesome' Israelis.