

their sale to the southern Lebanese population of the food and construction materials they had seized from the Palestinians in July. In such trade, the Israelis have made already more than \$40 million in a few months, more than the usual trade with Egypt and certainly an incentive to keep the "good fence" wide open.

Most happy about that situation have been the British proponents of a "Third Way," who expect that Gemayel's death and the subsequent chaos will render ineffective any serious attempt by President Reagan to stabilize the area. With that perspective, the British government has been sending to the Middle East a heavy diplomatic squad, involving Defense Minister John Nott, Foreign Office number-two man Douglas Hurd, and a parliamentary delegation. Going from Jordan to the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, these British representatives have been advocating that no one but Britain can best "mediate" in the present situation, and try for example to bridge the gap between the American proposals and the Fez peace plan. A similar thing was said to Egyptian President Mubarak when he visited Paris this month, with the French government underlining that both Paris and Cairo had an interest in "not being crushed either by the Pax Americana or by the Saudi-sponsored peace plan."

For these circles, chaos in Lebanon is good news as it means troubles for America and growing pressures for its allies in the region, especially the Saudis. Whether they had a direct hand in Gemayel's assassination is another matter.

Hence the perspective for the region is quite bleak. If Israel follows the suicidal path opened by the duplicity and the deals of Sharon, Lebanon will become its Vietnam, and could engulf Israel entirely into a war that no one can win, but only lose in the most degrading way. Three months of Israel's presence in Lebanon have already shown that.

Only two powers can keep the situation under control. First the United States—if its foreign policy is made by President Reagan and not by Kissinger. Following the administration's forceful denunciation of Israel's occupation of western Beirut, Reagan would have to intervene in Lebanon against all foreign powers to establish Lebanon's sovereignty and independence, including against those Lebanese leaders who, like Camille Chamoun, represent interests located in London.

A most important role is being played by the Vatican, as underlined by the Sept. 15 meeting between the Pope and PLO Chairman Arafat; a meeting which could pave the way for an ecumenical reconciliation in the region based on the Vatican encyclicals *Populorum Progressio* and *Laborem Exercens*, both of which are dedicated to peace and development in the world. The Vatican may attempt to launch a dialogue in the Middle East based on *Laborem Exercens*; the Vatican also has cards to play within Lebanon. For Lebanon, as we have underlined, the only potential capable President seems to be Raymond Edde, one of the rare Lebanese leaders not bought by foreign powers. The alternatives to these preliminary steps are blood and fire throughout the region for decades.

## Politics inside Israel: while the Labourites

by Mark Burdman

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin dropped what the Israeli press described as a "bombshell" on Sept. 8, by calling for early elections for the country's parliament and national leadership positions to be held in 1983, two years earlier than the expiration terms of office begun in 1981.

The "bombshell" effect lay in the fact that Begin was setting forth a challenge to the parties and leaders of Israel at a highly sensitive moment in Israeli history: will his policies, evident in the Lebanon war and other characteristic extravaganzas of the recent period, be affirmed by the Israeli electorate, or can an alternative to these policies coalesce in an effective way during the next weeks and months? This question only underscores the profound nature of the strategic, economic, and moral dilemmas Israel's population must confront as a consequence of the ongoing Vietnam-style quagmire that Israel now faces in Lebanon—a quagmire that *EIR* founder and contributing editor Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. warned would develop in a widely circulated statement issued soon after the Lebanon war began.

Begin's immediate calculation in calling for early elections is that he thinks he can rally the population over "national unity" and "national independence" against the so-called "Reagan Plan" for the Middle East, which might better be termed the "Shultz-Kissinger Plan," and which indeed is constructed to destabilize Israel—and its Arab neighbors—in the coming weeks. Begin's mood for this campaign was evidenced in a Sept. 9 speech in which he blasted the United States for planning to overthrow him and caustically commented, "Israel is not Chile and I am not Allende."

By adopting the role that one Israeli observer described to me as the "populist playing to the mobs," Begin calculates that he can win enough support to ensure that his Likud Party will be the first in Israel's history to win an absolute majority in the Knesset, or parliament.

With such a mandate, Begin thinks he can move toward effective annexation of the occupied West Bank (or, in Begin's words, establish "eternal rule over Judea and Samar-

# Begin plays to mob remain divided

ia’), and bring the halo of legitimacy over his biblical-fundamentalist strategies for Israel in the Middle East.

## Begin, the Sephardim, and Sharon

Begin’s assumption is that he has emerged politically stronger in the period following the enforced evacuation of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Beirut. From a survey of Israeli sources, it is evident that this calculation has more than a grain of truth: while tens of thousands of Israelis have grave doubts over the strategic and moral wisdom of the Lebanon escapade, the war over the northern border has crystallized a coalition of forces in Israel that is now predominant. This is the alliance between the fundamentalist Begin, believer in Israel being the recreation of the Maccabean warriors of pre-Christian times, with the economically underprivileged Sephardic (or Oriental) Jews of Israel, who compensate for their “underclass” position in Israeli life by regular displays of military superiority over Israel’s Arab neighbors.

Since the Sephardics now number the majority of Israel’s Jews, this newly crystallized relationship represents a potent fact of life in Israeli terms, especially given that no significant alternative identity or culture has been presented to the Sephardic population to take them out from under Begin’s sway.

In trying to capitalize on the chauvinistic and militaristic aspects of the Lebanon war, Begin has maintained an ambivalent relationship with his defense minister, Ariel Sharon, whose ambitions to succeed Begin as prime minister are no secret. Sharon has elaborated a fullfledged imperial strategic conception for Israel, extending Israel’s dominion of action from India in the east to Chad and Zaire in central Africa, which is more comprehensive as a conscious design than Begin’s relatively incalculable actions. Since Sharon, the ambitious architect of the Lebanon war, has become the lightning rod for opposition to that action, it has remained an open question in the minds of Israeli observers whether Begin could at some point decide to isolate himself from the risk that Sharon represents and remove the obese defense minister

and his organized-crime-linked faction from power.

The two men converge, however, on a de facto annexation policy for the West Bank, and a policy of extensive (and illegal) settlements for that region. Both are, in that context, effectively committed to new Israeli confrontations with Arab regimes, including the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Assad brothers in Syria, and, ultimately, the House of Saud in Saudi Arabia.

The main counterpole, as the call for early elections circulates, is the opposition Labour Party, the largest mass organization in Israel, with 300,000 members and hegemonic control in the trade unions, certain farm organizations, and in leading professional and intellectual layers. It is, however, far from clear whether the Labour Party has the vision and internal political cohesion to rise to the necessities of the occasion and challenge Begin’s bid for a new majority position.

## Labour’s problems

Labour is currently beset by contradictions in its bid to be an effective opposition. The foremost paradox is that Labour Party Chairman and prospective prime ministerial candidate Shimon Peres and others think that achieving power at this point is a function of, as Israeli sources have put it, “reaching an understanding with the United States” over several protocols in the misnamed Reagan plan, especially those centering on an Israeli-Jordanian deal over the West Bank, the so-called “Jordan option.” But the more that Labour makes known its favorable attitude toward the American plan (and the more that certain circles in Washington and London fawn over a Peres premiership in Israel), the more that Peres et al. open themselves up to charges of being foreign agents in the Israeli scene—and thereby vulnerable to Begin’s “national independence” propaganda.

The second paradox is that Labour has calculated that it must fill its treasury with moneys from not terribly kosher sources in order to mount an organizing drive. Israeli sources tell me that Peres has recently been accepting funds from the secretive billionaire Shaul Eisenberg, an internationally based operator whose ties to organized-crime circles are well known. This alone could seriously dull the edge of an effective campaign in the coming months.

At the same time, Labour is beset by ancient petty inter-cine quarrels, centered around a feud between former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Peres. The opportunistic Rabin (a good friend of Sharon) has recently intensified the split by launching attacks on the “Reagan Plan” at the same moment that Peres was cautiously praising that Anglo-American initiative.

This quarreling is potentially very demoralizing to the cadre and mass base of the Labour Party. One leading Labourite told *EIR*: “The threat of complications between Peres and Rabin on the political horizon is weakening the party. Circles behind the scenes are trying to prevent this, either by strengthening Peres’ courage to make an effective bid, or by

finding an entirely new face, a neutral face, to head the party.”

### Alternatives to Peres

One favored option, which is being especially pushed by the Party's Jerusalem branch, but also by cadre across the country, is to have current President Yitzhak Navon head the Labour ticket. As Israel's president over the recent period, Navon has established a reputation for statesmanship and, as a cultured Sephardic Israeli, is thought to be the sole prominent Labourite who could effectively oppose Begin. Labour insiders have told *EIR* that pressure is mounting on Navon to step down from the presidency, so he could be eligible for the prime ministerial candidacy and head the ticket in early elections, should they be held. Navon's term ends in May 1983, so if elections were to be in October-November of next year, as is being mooted, the "Navon option" could indeed come to pass.

Another alternative mooted in certain trade union-based Labour Party circles is that of Yaacov Levinson, former head of the powerful bank Hapoalim (bank of the Histadrut National Labor Confederation) and currently head of the Ampal-Israel corporation. Levinson is considered a "Gaullist" in Israeli economic terms, as an advocate of using dirigist methods of state-directed credit for productive ends. He is thought in this respect to be an alternative to the "free-market speculation" economics of the current government, influenced by fascist economist Milton Friedman.

Levinson is not known to be making an active bid for the candidacy for prime minister, but the very talk of such an option underscores the dire straits of the Israeli economy at this moment. Israel is reliably reported to have a total foreign debt at this point of some \$23 billion, by far the highest in the world on a per capita basis. According to one trade-union leader in Israel, "The economy is in very, very bad shape, and the bubble will burst within months. The government is just borrowing money, printing money, encouraging speculation. Agriculture, which used to be the crown of Israel, is being ruined. To get people's minds off this, the propaganda machines all day say, 'We are strong, we are strong.' It is like a drug."

In this context, it is not surprising that certain Labour circles have reacted with interest to the programmatic proposals of Lyndon LaRouche, as representing a possible basis for mobilizing the Israeli population. These proposals are centered on extending the drive for a new world economic order into the Middle East, through joint Arab-Israeli commitment to "Great Enterprises" in water and energy development, reorganization of the Israeli debt, and a renewed scientific and infrastructural development push within Israel. Were elements of such a program to be efficiently adopted by Labour, and were they to be the basis for a new self-identity for large numbers of Israelis, the Israeli voter would have an alternative choice were elections to come to pass next year.

## The political legacy of Nahum Goldmann

On Aug. 29, Nahum Goldmann died in a West German hospital at the age of 87. Immediately, the news was flashed around the world that "a towering figure in Jewish history" had passed away.

Goldmann was co-founder and president of the World Jewish Congress for 29 years, until 1978. For 12 years he led the World Zionist Organization. From the seeming first promise of a Jewish homeland during World War I, through the Holocaust and the founding of Israel, Goldmann acted, as he sometimes put it, as an ambassador at large of the Jews and a citizen of the world (see *EIR*, Sept. 14).

Among his last public acts was an interview given to the West German news magazine *Der Spiegel* published the week of Aug. 22. Believing that it is even more important that Goldmann's voice be heard and understood now that the man himself is no longer with us, we reprint here excerpts from that interview.

**Q:** Mr. Goldmann, you have said, however Israel's invasion into Lebanon turns out, the whole thing could "still end in a political catastrophe." What did you mean?

**A:** I mean, that the aggression against Lebanon is the climax of a line of false development which Israel has taken from the beginning.

**Q:** From the founding of the state?

**A:** Since the founding. . . . From the beginning, there was in Zionism a deep split. A great philosopher and thinker, Achad Haam, from Odessa, claimed against Herzl, that the state is for the Jews quite unimportant, that what is important is a "spiritual center."

**Q:** How should that be possible without a state?

**A:** Since religion, whose power had preserved the Jewish people in the Diaspora for two thousand years, lost its power—most Jews are today no longer strictly orthodox—the Jews must have a new center, that would inspire them to continued existence. . . . Zionism never decided between