

The international network behind the Temple Mount terrorist plot

by David Hammer

For two months now, 27 members of an underground Israeli terrorist network have been on trial in Israel. They are charged with terrorist crimes on the West Bank, including murder, and with a January attempt to blow up the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the second most holy shrine in Islam. The Israeli terrorists' ideological dedication is to rebuild Solomon's temple, destroyed by the Romans in 73 A.D., on the site now occupied by the Muslim shrine.

Two leading political forces in Israel were named in connection with the arrested terrorists: Minister without Portfolio Ariel Sharon, and Adviser to the Prime Minister in the War Against Terror, "Dirty Rafi" Eytan. But proceedings were never pursued vigorously against these two figures.

The names Eytan and Sharon point to the fact that the "Temple Mount plot" is not a plan that is being carried out in the interests of the Israeli nation state. The terrorists involved in the plot represent, as Israeli President Chaim Herzog declared last month, "not just deranged individuals at the margin of society who have caused these acts of murder and terror. They have occurred against the background of culture, of political discussion, that evokes the deepest revulsion."

Both Sharon and Eytan are assets of those circles around Henry Kissinger and his oligarchical employers in London and Switzerland who are determined to use the Temple Mount plot to destroy Israel and hurl the Middle East into a devastating series of protracted religious wars. Aside from the policy of disintegration he has pursued in the region since 1973, Kissinger was exposed in 1982 for his involvement with Sharon in real estate speculation on the West Bank based on the full Israeli annexation of the territory.

The key financial backers of the Jewish underground apparatus are also associates of Kissinger: Edmund Safra of American Express—to whose board of directors Kissinger was recently coopted—and an entire nexus of intermarried Syrian Jewish financier families associated with Safra. These families, originally based in Aleppo, Syria, have for centuries run the trade routes of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires in the Middle East for the leading families of Venice.

The trail from Sharon and his former business partner, Eytan, also leads to the Washington, D.C.-based Joseph Churba of the "New Right" Center for International Security. Churba, who helped found the terrorist Jewish Defense League

with Meir Kahane, has been actively campaigning for "rebuilding Solomon's Temple" in his lecture tours in the United States.

It is through the "New Right" cover exemplified by Churba that the line of investigation leads to Moscow's involvement in the Temple Mount plot.

These forces converge in the funding and support operations for the **Yeshiva Ateret Cohanim** in Jerusalem. The yeshiva's official purpose is to train the prospective "priesthood" for the new Solomon's Temple. It is the logistical center for the Temple Mount plot.

Within Israel, Ateret Cohanim's private bank is the North American Bank of Israel, known in some Israeli circles as "the bank of the Jews from Chalab" (Aleppo). The yeshiva also receives extensive funds from Tefahot, the largest mortgage bank in Israel. In the United States, the lawyer for the rapidly expanding Ateret support network is Bernard Hoenic, whose family has for decades represented the leading Syrian Jewish families transplanted to Brooklyn, such as the Shaloms and the Esses.

American money is funneled to Ateret Cohanim, according to Hoenic, through the **PEF Israel Endowment Funds, Inc.** of Madison Avenue in New York, on whose board sits Stephen Shalom. Major names in this network include:

- the Nakash Brothers of Jordache Jeans;
- Edmond Safra of American Express;
- Murjani of Murjani Jeans.

According to sources, it is this network of Syrian Jews that routinely finances Ariel Sharon's trips to the United States.

Within Jerusalem, Ateret Cohanim plays a quiet role in comparison to the **Birkat Avraham**, which is composed of club-wielding ex-convicts who terrorize the Arab population of the holy city. Birkat Avraham is funded by the Dwek family, who for centuries were allied to the Safras in Aleppo. Cyril Dwek is today the right-hand man of Edmund Safra in New York. Safra's own hobby is "funding synagogues."

Ateret Cohanim was founded in 1978 by Mattityahu Hachohen Dan, a student of Rabbi Shlomo Aviner of the Golan Heights settlement of Ramat Golan. Obsessed with the idea of founding a yeshiva for the training of a "priesthood" for the new temple, Dan opened his yeshiva in the almost entirely

Muslim Old Quarter in Jerusalem, perhaps one hundred yards from Temple Mount.

All students at the yeshiva are military veterans, and regularly go about armed. The rabbi in charge of all aspects of the yeshiva, Aviner, is reputed by Israeli sources to be a ranking member of Israel's domestic intelligence service, the Shabak (Shin Bet).

Dan himself, according to American sources familiar with the operation, is close to Rafdi Eytan, the Adviser to the Prime Minister's Office for the War Against Terror.

"Dirty Rafi," a former business partner of Sharon and the man who managed Sharon's 1976 election drive, is a close associate of several of those arrested or questioned in the recent underground roundup. One of his closest associates, Aron Zar, is one of the 26 charged with trying to blow up the Dome of the Rock. Zar was a partner of Eytan's brothers at the time of the arrest, and was Eytan's partner until Eytan took office.

Eytan's predecessor in the Prime Minister's Office Against Terror, Amikhay Paglin, was arrested for smuggling weapons to Rabbi Meir Kahane's terrorist JDL networks abroad, since merged in most essentials with the Gush Emunim settlement cult, which provided the 26 suspects arrested in May.

Rabbi Aviner himself is said by the secretary of the Settlements in Judaea and Samaria [the occupied West Bank], and the Gaza Strip, Israel Harel, to be a top "spiritual author" of the Gush Emunim. To a recent caller, Harel volunteered to arrange a quiet meeting with Sharon at his farm to set up funding for the Gush network.

Like the Gush Emunim, but using different tactics, Ateret is pursuing large-scale land reclamations, in this case a plan to turn the entire Muslim Quarter into housing under the direct control of their yeshiva. The property acquisitions are handled by "Dirty Rafi" Eytan's friend, Mattityahu Dan. As Ateret public relations director, Eliazer Berkeley, expressed the conception recently, "We're trying to resettle this area to make it a Jewish area once again. . . . The PLO in our area has been much reduced. They used to put a lot of pressure on Arabs not to sell, but now they're not as much a force. When I came to America recently, I had a briefcase full of properties. All of a sudden quite a number of properties became available. The reason it was so difficult in the past was the PLO. The Arabs now are much more friendly. We are giving them substantial amounts of money."

The Soviet angle

There is no accident in the fact that the Ariel Sharon faction in Israel is known to have had numerous secret dealings with the Soviet Union, nor that Henry Kissinger is a Soviet agent-of-influence, and that the Soviets have given their covert aid to the Temple Mount plot. For them, the bolstering of the faction dedicated to the destruction of the Dome of the Rock is one play in the overall strategic game to force the United States out of the Middle East.

The vehicle for this Soviet penetration is the "New Right International"—which waves the banner of a worldwide fight against communism, of which the Christian fundamentalist-Israeli alliance is one aspect. The function of the "New Right" is turning justified alarm about the Soviet military build-up into impotent reactions (for example, Lt. General Daniel Graham's "High Frontier" flying junkpile, instead of beam weapons). It is a weapon aimed at the ideological blind spot of U.S. intelligence agencies.

Prominent figures in the "New Right" project include Joseph Churba, head of the Center for International Security who is also a close friend and former business partner of Meir Kahane, and self-avowed "universal fascist" Michael Ledeen, author of the notorious *New Republic* article covering up the real sources of the Temple Mount plot. Last spring, Churba spoke at a meeting of U.S. Christian fundamentalists, where he endorsed their plan to rebuild Solomon's Temple. After the meeting, this die-hard anti-communist remarked to *EIR* investigators that it was time for Israel to abandon the United States and come to an understanding with the Soviet Union.

Churba and Ledeen are known to be assets of James Jesus Angleton, former CIA counterintelligence chief and himself a prime example of the New Right. The fanatical anti-communist Angleton somehow was the last to discover the truth about British agent Harold "Kim" Philby, currently a KGB general. Right up until the week Philby was exposed, Angleton regularly met the Nazi-communist agent for lunch in Washington, D.C.

In Israel, two key New Right figures are Member of Knesset Michael Kleiner and his Chief of Staff Avigdor Eskin. Eskin signifies the Soviet penetration of this operation. Now from the West Bank terrorist stronghold of Kiryat Arba, Eskin was born in the Soviet Union. He was permitted to found the JDL chapter in Moscow and translated Kahane's works into Russian. Then he was permitted to leave the Soviet Union, and has more than once been fingered as an important KGB deployment by intelligence sources.

The U.S. side of Ateret Cohanim

Ateret Public Relations man Eliezer Berkeley has just completed a five-week tour in the United States to boost the Temple Mount project.

Two key figures who will be active as board members of Ateret in the United States are Rabbi Bunim of Far Rockaway, New York City, and Rabbi Jay Marcus, head of Staten Island Young Israel. Marcus recently returned from a visit at Ateret and a several-hour meeting with Rabbi Aviner. Marcus is also the head of the Genesis Foundation in New York, another conduit for "outreach" programs into Israel, which may be formally affiliated with Ateret's work in the near future.

Another conduit for funds is the Settlement Movement Family and Legal Defense Fund, one of whose top members

in Israel is Rabbi Aviner, head of Ateret Cohanim. Also on the board of the Settlement Movement Defense Fund are some of the key figures on the U.S. side of Gush Emunim, clustered around the tax-exempt Gush Emunim Foundation, including Alex Friedman and Sam Koorman.

Another board member of the Gush Emunim Foundation is money-mover Bob Jacobs. It was reportedly Jacobs who gave Meir Kahane funding in 1968 when the terrorist Jewish Defense League was gearing up its operations. The scale of his resources is indicated in the remark by Rabbi Tendler of New York, also a supporter of the Settlement Movement Defense Fund, "Bob Jacobs will give me \$25,000 for any cause I want." When questioned where Jacobs gets his money, Tendler replied, "I assume he steals it."

New York is not the only base for Ateret support. As part of his tour, Berkeley spent a week at the home of Dr. Morton Freiman in Florida, a plastic surgeon who has volunteered for duty in some of Israel's wars, and whose hobby is building scale models of the Temple, one of which he has recently shipped to Jerusalem. While staying at Freiman's house, Berkeley virtually commuted to the nearby home of Dr. Irving Moscowitz, to discuss financial deals. According to the current director of the yeshiva's day-to-day operations, Menachem Bar Shalom, Moscowitz was the figure who provided the seed money which allowed Ateret to begin property acquisitions several years ago. Moscowitz is currently building his own home outside Jerusalem, presumably in order to be closer to the action.

Ateret is expecting major funding from the United States in the near future. The funds which have heretofore been quietly channeled through the PEF Israel Endowment Funds, Inc. (headed by Sidney Musher at 342 Madison Avenue in New York) will in the future probably go directly through the tax-exempt establishment Ateret's lawyer Hoenig is working on incorporating in New York State. Ateret has also begun a major push for funds in Britain, and has received a \$100,000 contribution from the London businessman, Cyril Stein.

The question might well be asked: Do these backers know that their money is going to fund terrorists?

The 'diamond in the crown'

The Temple Mount plan also involves the creation of an institute dedicated to the building of the Third Temple. Ateret members refer to the Institute for Research of the Temple, whose exhibits are to be placed in the rooms next to the Western Wall, as the "diamond in the crown." According to Bar Shalom, "The Institute is in the planning stages. It will carry out research into the exact location of the Temple, the measurements of the Temple, the elements to be used in rebuilding it when it could be rebuilt. We are involved in the actual execution of small-scale models. We are working through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. You know next to the Western Wall, there is a system of chambers. To the left

of it are a number of chambers. They are now open to the public but they don't have anything in them. With the help of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and [Interior Minister] Dr. Burg, we plan to establish a museum there on a very nice scale. We will have models of the tabernacle in the wilderness, models of the first and second Temple, the Cohanim in their various dress, sacrificing animals, etc.

"You see there are one million tourists a year coming to the Western Wall, most not knowing why they come to the wall. We want to have a museum right at their fingertips so they can see these models. . . .

"As part of the overall project we also have a field school, giving tours, followed up by lectures on the subject I mentioned. We have a few thousand school children per year now from the cities and the kibbutzim, who get lectures on the tabernacles and altars.

"We will also be beginning some sort of small workshop, to make the models. Our first client will be the Ministry of Education. Already they have ordered 100 models for the schools." The major Jerusalem hotels are doing their bit also, by allowing Ateret guides to run their tours.

The role of Minister of Religious Affairs, Dr. Burg, is noteworthy, if it is indeed what the Ateret members brag: He himself has stood up against the Temple Mount fanaticism before, and suffered attacks on his son and the burglary of his house.

Bar Shalom is very quiet with respect to the head of the Institute for Research on the Temple, Edoardo Recanati, a figure in Venetian banking circles, and the man who founded the largest mutual fund in Italy, Fonditalia, before he felt called upon to come to Israel. According to numerous circles, Recanati is very close to Stanley Goldfoot, the former Stern gang terrorist who heads the Christian-fundamentalist-associated Jerusalem Temple Mount Foundation.

Recanati, as Goldfoot, was for years close to Meir Kahane, the founder of the terrorist Jewish Defense League, himself arrested on suspicion of trying to blow up the Dome of the Rock as early as 1980. As some of these old connections drift out into public, Ateret members grow very testy when questioned about them. As Bar Shalom recently said of Recanati, "I don't want to speak for him or his past relation to Stan Goldfoot, but it is a *past* relation. He [Recanati] is supportive of our organization and has been for over half a year."

The leaders of Ateret are quite aware of the significance for world Jewry of the events in Israel. As Bar Shalom stressed, "All these things will be produced on an international scale. We're thinking extremely big."

Protection from the Likud government?

The investigation of the Jewish underground so far has reached no further than to the lower-echelon associates of Sharon and Eytan, leading to the question of the degree of

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protection enjoyed by the Temple Mount crew from the Israeli government. The best place to begin is with Minister of Science and Technology Yuval Neeman. According to Lambert Dolphin, one of the Christian fundamentalists comprising the Jerusalem Temple Mount Foundation, Neeman is a secret member of the Foundation. He was the first to introduce into cabinet meetings a resolution that Jews be allowed to go up onto Temple Mount to pray, a proposition which is abhorred by mainstream religious Jewish thinking. Neeman has also been vociferous in his defense of the Jewish underground, recently endorsing the maiming of the West Bank mayors in 1980.

This core of support appears to have been enough to pull others into line. As Berkeley put it, when questioned about support from government figures, “The support within the government is the fact that we are *here*. Four to five years ago this would not have been possible. At that time you had a Labor government and their policy was not to allow Jews back [into Jerusalem]. Five years ago the first person to come back signaled a change in government policy. They are not opposing us. It’s a political issue, a very touchy political issue. The present government is tacitly giving us the go-ahead.”

Bar Shalom elaborated on which ministers were supporting the project: “Well, there’s Dr. Burg. and Zevulun Hammer [minister of education] is also aware of us and in favor and behind what we’re trying to do. And the Minister of Science and Development, Yuval Neeman, is also on our team. He is well aware of all aspects of what we are doing. And Ariel Sharon is also very close to us, very much in favor of all our organizational work. And then there is an assistant

minister to the Ministry of Social Work Department, Benzion Rubin, who is also behind us. There are various people in Likud and Tehiya also supporting us. Rabbi Druckman and their Chief Rabbis—we have their approval. The rabbis of Haifa and Rehovoth. All have been through our tours and we are in close contact with all of them on a very regular basis.”

Ateret’s New York lawyer, Bernard Hoenig, added, “I know they’ve met with Moshe Arens to inform him of what’s going on. I was told there are a number of prominent people in the government who approve of what they’re doing. And I have a letter from a Member of the Knesset in Israel, Haim Druckman, saying, ‘I recommend unstintingly Ateret Cohanim.’ And there’s Toussia-Cohen, he’s very prominent [and also the lawyer for the Jewish underground]. You see you have to understand one thing. The government will not openly come out and say ‘yes, we want you to do this.’ They’re concerned that things will be misinterpreted. So you probably won’t find them coming out openly like that because they’re afraid of what people will say, that they’re trying to take over the Old Quarter. . . . It’s a backhanded okay.”

Hoenig also mentioned “prominent scholars” supporting the work of Ateret, “There’s Rabbi Solovechik—he’s a lecturer there. The former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yosef Ovadia, has participated in ceremonies there, and the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. They had a midrashah seminar, with one session on the obligations of the priesthood and the history of the high court of Israel.” Rabbi Bunim of Far Rockaway, a board member of Ateret for the United States, noted, “They have the tremendous backing of the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shapira.”