

The ‘Mega’-Maniacs Steering Sharon’s Mideast War Drive

by Scott Thompson and Jeffrey Steinberg

On Oct. 30, Edgar Bronfman, Sr. delivered a speech at the Jerusalem Theater, opening the 11th Plenary Assembly of the World Jewish Congress, in which he called, in effect, for a “Warsaw Ghetto” final solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Using somewhat more discreet language, Bronfman declared: “Settlements on the West Bank which cannot be defended should be dismantled. The Intifada is going to stay, and we can negotiate endlessly and get nowhere. If there is no peace, Israel should separate from the Palestinians.” He labeled the Israeli presence inside Gaza “a mistake,” and, according to the Oct. 31 *Jerusalem Post*, called for the construction of a fence, surrounding a Palestinian territory, the size and shape to be determined by Israel.

Bronfman insisted that Israel must say to the Palestinians: “Do what you want to do, but don’t cross the line.” He concluded, if any suicide bombers attack Israel, “we have the moral high ground, and we will devastate the enemy.”

Bronfman’s call for unilateral separation—under conditions imposed unilaterally by Israel—at the keynote plenary of the WJC assembly, signaled that a drive is now under way to implement this proposal. It is a policy that was widely circulated during the Summer, after Bush Administration pressure had forced Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the hardliners inside the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) command to back down, for the time being, from their plans to provoke a major escalation in violence, through a July 29, 2001 Temple Mount Faithful assault on the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem.

At the time, Lyndon LaRouche had issued a prescient warning that the IDF radicals were preparing to play the “Temple Mount card” to provoke a major religious war in the Middle East—not on behalf of Israeli-based interests, but on behalf of the Anglo-American faction pressing for a “Clash of Civilizations” new Thirty Years War, to engulf all of the Eurasian region in bloodshed and chaos. The provoking of

such a Clash of Civilizations has been the stated goal of Zbigniew Brzezinski, Samuel Huntington, and Bernard Lewis for years.

The unilateral separation scheme, dubbed by its proponents “a war and then a wall,” was surfaced on Aug. 10, 2001, in a *Washington Post* op-ed by *Newsweek* magazine editor-in-chief Fareed Zakaria, who demanded that Israel initiate a “unilateral separation.” On Aug. 16, *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer called for an Israeli invasion of the West Bank and Gaza “Area A” territories, with the objective of wiping out the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, seizing weapons caches and safe houses of Hamas and Islamic Jihad—and then occupying the areas only long enough to construct a high wall, permanently separating the Palestinian area from Israel.

The next day, Aug. 17, *Washington Post* syndicated columnist George Will, who is also a member of the international editorial advisory board to the Hollinger Corporation, spelled out the scheme in the most explicit detail, in an op-ed titled “War and Then a Wall.”

“A short war—a few days: over before European and American diplomats’ appeasement reflexes kick in—should have four main objectives,” he wrote: Kill or capture “the terrorists”; destroy the Palestinian Authority’s “military infrastructure”; destroy “other physical infrastructure useful to the Palestinian Authority including all newspaper and broadcasting facilities”; and then unilaterally define Israel’s border by building a wall. Will’s map envisioned Israeli permanent annexation of all of Jerusalem.

The same day that the Will column was published, in what appeared to be a coordinated move, the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz* announced that four Knesset (parliament) members (MKs), including new Cabinet Minister Dan Meridor, of the Center Party, announced the launching of a non-partisan “new move-

ment” to force unilateral separation. The separation plan was drawn up, according to *Ha’aretz*, by unnamed reserve IDF officers, and was presented to Prime Minister Sharon by Trade and Industry Minister Dalia Itzik. The “electronic wall” envisioned in the Meridor-Itzik plan (also endorsed by Likud Party MK Michael Eitan and Labor Party MK Haim Ramon) incorporated Jerusalem and a 90-mile segment of the West Bank in the permanently annexed Israeli territory.

Such a unilateral separation, whether it began with a massive IDF military assault on the Palestinian Authority or not, would be a certain recipe for Mideast War, a fact hardly lost on the authors of the scheme.

In short, Bronfman kicked off his last session as President of the World Jewish Congress by demanding that Israel launch a new Mideast war—at the very moment that the United States is preoccupied with an already out-of-control war in Afghanistan and the ongoing irregular warfare assault against the U.S.A. itself, which Lyndon LaRouche has identified as nothing less than a coup d’état, directed by a powerful “enemy within.”

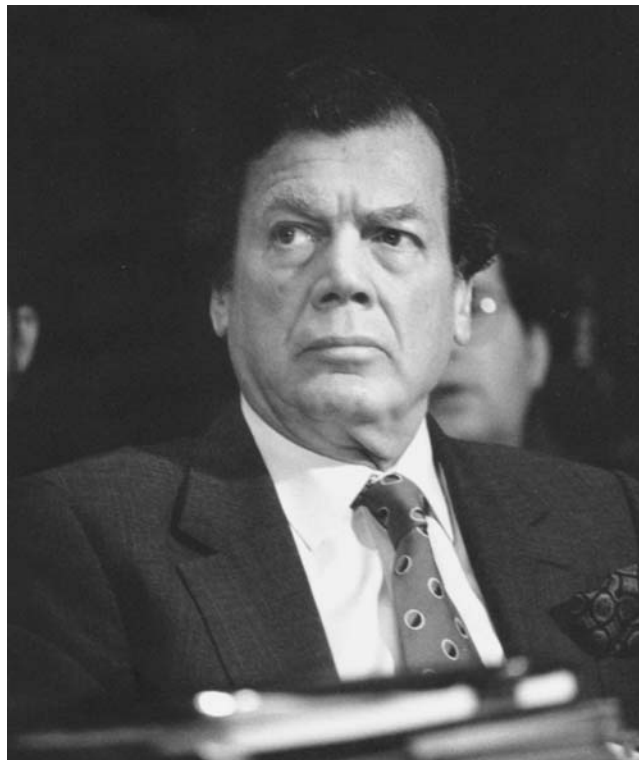
The ‘New Sanhedrin’

Bronfman’s call for war was not just issued in his capacity as President of the WJC. It was issued on behalf of the “Mega” Group, a super-secret, by-invitation-only group of powerful American and Canadian “mega-billionaires,” who meet behind closed doors twice a year, to set the overall policy for the “official” Israel Lobby in North America, and deploy billions of dollars a year in “charitable” cash (see “Israeli Spies: ‘Mega Was Not An Agent—Mega Was the Boss,’” *EIR* Aug. 31, 2001).

Mega Group was launched in 1991 by Seagrams Corp. director Charles Bronfman and Victoria’s Secret owner Leslie Wexner. Among the known charter members were Edgar Bronfman, Sr. (Charles’ older brother and Seagrams co-chairman), U.S. Healthcare founder Leonard Abramson, hedge fund manager and “New Democrats” moneybags Charles Steinhardt, former Purple Gang rum runner-cum oil tycoon Max Fisher, bagel magnate Max Lender, Baltimore real estate developer Harvey “Bud” Meyerhoff, Tulsa investment broker Charles Schusterman, and Loews Corp. chairman Laurence Tisch.

As *EIR* first reported on Aug. 31, some Mega Group members are chary about flaunting their power in public. Charles Bronfman told the *Wall Street Journal*’s Lisa Miller, “From the beginning, we didn’t want to be seen as a threat to anybody. . . . We don’t want to be seen as the Sanhedrin (the highest court of the ancient Jews).”

Other charter members are less shy about promoting their power grab. On Nov. 6, 2000, *Link* magazine published an interview with Michael Steinhardt by Michael Massing. Massing observed, “Michael Steinhardt likes to poke and prod. In the world of Jewish philanthropy, he is known for speaking his mind, and, when I dropped by his office, he did



Top figure in the Mega Group, Edgar Bronfman is now a leading proponent of unilateral separation by Israel, creating a “Warsaw Ghetto” Palestinian homeland surrounded by a fence.

not disappoint.” Massing continued, “When asked about the current state of Jewish philanthropy, Steinhardt . . . declared, ‘I feel that the durability of some American philanthropic organizations is far greater than is justified by their effectiveness. It’s a shame some of these organizations don’t just go away.’”

“Asked to be more specific,” Massing continued, “he did not hesitate: ‘The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Wiesenthal Center, which are all dedicated to defense, to protection against anti-Semitism, to Holocaust memory, rather than to addressing the needs of the next generation.’”

There may have been more method than madness to Steinhardt’s frontal assault against the biggest and most prominent of the American Jewish tax-exempt charitable and educational agencies. On Feb. 17, 1999, *Philanthropy News Digest* reported that the three largest Israeli fundraising organizations in North America, the United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations, and the United Israel Appeal, had merged into one single mega-charity, called the United Jewish Communities. The first Chairman of the UJC, which raised \$1.9 billion the previous year, was Charles Bronfman, the co-founder of Mega Group. When his term expired this year, he was succeeded by the son of Laurence Tisch, another charter member of the Mega Group.



Ariel Sharon, Israel's Prime Minister and a prime beneficiary of Mega Group funding and political machinations to wreck the Israel-Palestine peace process.

One of Mega Group's other power centers is the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, whose executive vice president, Malcolm Hoenlein, has been a consultant on a number of Mega Group projects. The just-retired president of the Conference, perfume magnate Ronald Lauder, has not responded to calls from reporters asking whether he is a member of the Mega Group. Lauder is one of the biggest financial boosters of both Ariel Sharon and Sharon's Likud rival, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Mega Group members also dominate the board of trustees of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the semi-official Israel lobby think-tank in Washington, that has been aggressively pressing for an all-out war against Iraq, as a cornerstone of any successful "war against terrorism." WINEP founder Martin Indyk was one of the most important figures inside the Clinton Administration, sabotaging the July 2000 Camp David summit between then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, and President Bill Clinton.

The Mega members on the WINEP board included, as of 1999: Charles and Edgar Bronfman, Max Fisher, Harvey Meyerhoff, Charles Schusterman (now deceased, but apparently replaced in Mega by his wife Lynn), and Michael Steinhardt.

A Deal With Sharon

The last known meeting of the Mega Group occurred at the Manhattan mansion of Edgar Bronfman on May 3-4, 2001. According to a few scant news accounts, the Mega Group's ranks appear to have swelled from an initial core of 20 members—when it was formed in 1991 by the Bronfmans and Wexner—to nearly 50 super-rich activists today. *EIR* has so far been able to confirm the identities of a dozen members of the Mega Group.

However, a review of published material, combined with interviews with sources and with several Mega Group members and associates, provides a damning picture of the group's activities in recent months, and confirms that they are four-square in the camp of those pushing for a "Clash of Civilizations."

Soon after he was sworn in as Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon held a private meeting in Israel with Mega Group member Leonard Abramson.

At the meeting, a scheme was hatched to launch a propaganda offensive on behalf of the Israeli war hawks.

Back in the United States several days later, on Feb. 28, 2001, Abramson met with fellow-Mega Group members Edgar Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt. The three men launched "Emet" (the Hebrew word for "truth"), as both a private propaganda arm of the Prime Minister's office, and a recruiting operation for a future generation of Israeli agents-of-influence (and possible spies) inside the United States and Canada.

Michael Steinhardt told reporters Yoav Appel and Melissa Radler of the Hollinger Corp.-owned, pro-Sharon *Jerusalem Post* on March 2, that Emet is "not public relations. It's more of a think-tank."

News reports had indicated that Abramson, Steinhardt, and Bronfman had committed \$7 million to a start-up fund, that was to be bolstered by an initial \$1 million kick-in from the budget of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Ministry mandarins, and perhaps Foreign Minister Shimon Peres—a longtime advocate of a just peace with the Palestinians and the Arabs—objected to the idea of a group of hawkish American Jews shaping Israel's image abroad, and leaked details of the early Emet plans to Israel Radio, claiming that the Israeli consul general in New York, Alon Pinkas, was furious at the idea. In fact, Pinkas attended one of the first Emet planning sessions in New York, and later the Foreign Ministry was forced to issue a disclaimer about the Israel Radio report.

Such is the power of the Mega Group, with its extensive ties into the English-speaking media. Not only is Mega Group co-founder Wexner a director of the Hollinger Corp., owner of the *Telegraph* newspapers in Britain, the *Jerusalem Post*, and the *Chicago Sun Times* (the Hollinger Corp. is run by Bronfman-pal Conrad Black); but the Bronfman clan holds a major stake in AOL/Time Warner, one of the biggest of the American media cartels.

On Aug. 17, 2001, the *Jerusalem Post* revealed another facet of the Mega Group's "Emet" project: the recruitment and indoctrination of another generation of North American "tsayonim" ("Israel's helpers," a technical term for the recruitment of informal agents, first reported by former Mossad officer and author Victor Ostrovsky). In July and August of this year, 40 college students from 27 campuses in the United States and Canada, spent three weeks at the University of Tel Aviv, receiving training to serve as "informal spokesmen" for the Sharon regime's policies, when they return for their final years of school. The program, called EMET Fellows, also known as Education for Middle East Truth, "is not a propaganda tool," Tel Aviv University President and former diplomat Itamar Rabinovich protested, a bit too much.

Mega And The Evangelicals

One of the biggest boosters of the Emet project is Zionist Organization of America President Morton Klein, a certifiable right-wing war hawk, who has also engaged in an intimate collaboration with "Christian Zionists" who are unabashed proponents of a religious war in the Middle East.

While *EIR* has not been able to confirm directly that Klein's collusion with the evangelicals is a sanctioned Mega project, the convergence of their joint efforts with the known goals of the Mega-Sharon "propaganda offensive" are highly suggestive of just such a link.

EIR first reported on Aug. 24, 2001 ("Temple Mount Fanatics Seek To Blackmail Bush," by Anton Chaitkin), that on July 30—the day after Bush Administration and other international pressure forced the cancellation of Sharon's planned Temple Mount provocation in Jerusalem—Klein, Americans for a Safe Israel founder Herb Zweibon, evangelical Religious Roundtable founder Ed McAteer, Christian Friends of Israel leader Elwood McQuade, and representatives of Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, held a meeting at the White House with President Bush's religious community liaison Tim Goeglein. The delegation bluntly threatened President Bush, that if he did not give Sharon an unequivocal "green light" to deal with the "Palestinian terrorist threat," the combined wrath of the Zionist lobby and the 70 million-strong evangelical Christian voting bloc would destroy the Bush Presidency—just as they destroyed George Bush, Sr.'s 1992 re-election efforts.

EIR confirmed from several participants in the White House session that the entire group had been hosted by the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, David Ivry, at a private embassy luncheon, just before they held their "tough love" session with Goeglein.

EIR will report, next week, on a Nov. 7, 2001 public/private session of the same right-wing Zionist/evangelical apparatus, sponsored by the National Unity Coalition for Israel, at which speaker-after-speaker demanded the Clash of Civilizations, and assailed the Bush Administration for abandoning Sharon and Israel.

Anton Chaitkin and Art Ticknor contributed to this report.

Who's Who In 'Mega'

by Scott Thompson

The following are brief biographical profiles of some of the leading known members of the "Mega" group; notable, is the pattern of alleged organized crime ties.

Charles Bronfman: On Feb. 19, 1999, Charles Bronfman was elected chairman of United Jewish Communities (UJC). This \$4 billion cash cow subsumes 189 Jewish Federation contributors and 400 Jewish communities in North America. At a Nov. 9-13 UJC General Assembly in Washington, Bronfman will pass the chairmanship to James A. Tisch, son of Mega member Laurence Tisch.

Charles Bronfman had been co-chairman of Seagrams, until its merger with Vivendi. He is today chairman of Koor Industries Ltd., which is a high-tech holding company at the heart of the Israeli military-industrial complex. He is also chairman of Claridge-Israel, Inc., which took over Bank Hapolim, when the Israeli government privatized it. This deal was brokered by Ted Arison, an Israeli who, in the United States, built the Carnival Cruise Lines into a billion-dollar business. Arison got his financing to start Carnival from Meshulim Riklis, one of junk-bond manipulator Michael Milken's major clients, and a close ally of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Leslie Wexner: This co-founder of Mega is closely aligned with some of the top British-American-Commonwealth institutions. However, Wexner's main business is The Limited, Inc.—a holding company for such firms as Intimate Brands, Victoria's Secret, and Bath & Body Works—which he founded in 1963.

Wexner is a board member of Conrad Black's Hollinger International, Inc. and of Hollinger International Publishing Inc. Lady Margaret Thatcher is chairman of Hollinger's International Advisory Board, which also includes Henry Kissinger, William F. Buckley, and Richard Perle. Hollinger owns the leading Israeli English-language daily, the *Jerusalem Post*, which has become a mouthpiece for Sharon and the radical right.

Wexner is also on the board of the Aspen Institute, an important Anglo-American world federalist think-tank.

Leonard Abramson: Abramson was the founder of the murderous health maintenance organization, U.S. Healthcare. He sold it to Aetna Insurance for \$990 million. Now, apart from a stake in Israel's Bank Hapolim, Abramson owns the Maine Merchant Bank in Portland, which is a \$20 million