

*The contents of this section are selected from news reports, articles and editorials appearing in the Israeli press during the quarter. The items chosen illustrate trends on current issues or focus on a specific topic of specific relevance to the Arab-Israeli conflict.*

- **Yitzhak Shamir: Man of Mystery.** Journalists in two Israel dailies investigate the past of the man destined to succeed Menahem Begin as prime minister of Israel.
- **Gaining Land But Losing Soul?** Distinguished Israeli intellectual Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz presents his indictment of the Israel which has emerged since the 1967 war.
- **Without a Little Help From Your Friends.** Past Minister of Foreign Affairs Abba Eban seriously cautions against following the advice of Israel's American friends, and journalist Amnon Denker says the same thing with humor.
- **The Jew the State Thinks Is an Arab.** Excerpts from journalist Gidon Levy's prison interview with Udi Adiv, presently serving a 17-year sentence for contacts with "enemy" organizations.
- **Saying What's Meant.** Israeli writers Yehonatan Gefen and Yehoshua Sobol use a satirical pen to portray some harsh realities in Israeli society.

### **Yitzhak Shamir: Man of Mystery**

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*After the shock resignation of Prime Minister Begin on August 28 and the decision to nominate Yitzhak Shamir as his successor, the Israeli press paused to cast an eye over the likely new man at the top. Shamir's underground past with Lehi could not escape the focus, nor could*

*the fact that Shamir's name is closely associated with three as yet unresolved assassinations: that of British Minister for the Middle East Lord Moyne, assassinated in Cairo in 1944; of UN Mediator Count Folke Bernadotte, assassinated in Jerusalem in September 1948; and that of Shamir's superior in Lehi, Eliyahu Giladi, assassinated in 1943. These and other questions about Shamir were evoked in the*

article by journalists Akiva Eldar and Amnon Barzilai, writing in the Hebrew daily Haaretz (September 7, 1983):

Some years ago, the historian Dr. Yaakov Shavit, who researches the period of the underground movements, interviewed Yitzhak Shamir for a TV program which was not shown, and asked him some questions about his past in the underground. Regarding the murder of Lord Moyne, he asked Shamir whether still today he justifies the murder of political leaders. Shamir answered that he does. He said that "in certain circumstances, the murder of politicians who determine policy is legitimate." And Shamir added a question: "Had it been possible to murder Hitler in 1939 would I have murdered him? Is this legitimate or not?"

The Likud candidate for the post of Prime Minister is a man of mystery. Contrary to Menahem Begin, the commander of Etzel, the post of Shamir as one of the commanders is shrouded in mist. The historians of underground movements met a wall of silence when they tried to clarify the exact part of Shamir in the particular actions of the underground, and especially in the three affairs which were not completely clarified, and which are also among the best known of Lehi activities: the murder of Lord Moyne in Cairo in 1944, the execution of the member of Lehi, Eliyahu Giladi in 1943, and the murder of the UN Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte in September 1948.

The historian, Dr. Amitsur Ilan, who is researching the affair of the murder of Count Bernadotte for the purpose of writing a book, was confronted with an absolute refusal when he asked to interview Shamir. Even today, 34 years after the murder, Dr. Ilan has not succeeded in clarifying questions as to where the decision to commit the murder was taken,

who participated in taking it, what plan was adopted to realize it, and who actually did the deed. But basing himself on published sources, talks and interviews, and also on the books by Nathan Yalin-Mor and Dr. Israel Eldad, Dr. Ilan describes in his book the following scenario: the decision to murder Bernadotte was taken by the Center of Lehi, which consisted of three: Yalin-Mor, Eldad and Yitzhak Shamir. After considering the working methods of these three, their characters and personalities, Dr. Ilan concludes that Dr. Eldad did not have the organizational ability to execute the murder. Yalin-Mor claims in his book that he did not participate in the decision, but that he approved it post facto. Therefore, Dr. Ilan reached the conclusion that Yitzhak Shamir was the driving force for that action, although he was not the actual murderer, and on purpose was not in Jerusalem on that day, September 17, 1948. After Bernadotte's murder, Shamir went underground until the declaration of a general amnesty for all Lehi members on January 1, 1949.

Dr. Yaakov Shavit's evaluation of Shamir is as a person without ideology: in Lehi two different bodies tried to rule, one of which always looked for an ideology to justify its acts, and the other which included the persons who wanted "to do the job, shoot all over the place in order expel the English and to shut the Arabs' mouths." Shamir, according to Dr. Shavit, belonged to this second group. He never, during all the period of the underground, uttered one sentence of ideological value. He never published even one article in one of the many Lehi pamphlets. (Even though the articles were not signed, it is possible now to identify their authors. The name of Shamir does not appear among them). Also in the fifties and sixties Shamir was the person

who prepared the organizational infrastructure of Lehi. He was a sort of chief staff officer for instruction, and he instructed. He was considered an expert, even by Etzel members. The protocols show that, for one of the combined operations of Etzel and Lehi, Begin proposed a meeting between the two "experts," Shamir and Yaakov Meridor. Shamir, so emphasizes Dr. Shavit, was the chief planner of the murder of Lord Moyne. This murder was condemned by all the leaders of Etzel, who proposed that a demand be put before Lehi to dissolve itself and to cease to exist as a public body. After the murder, Eliyahu Lankin who (as a commander of Etzel) commanded the "Altalena" ship, and is now the Israeli Ambassador to South Africa, said: "They committed a low act of trickery." Shamir was the man who built Lehi as a deep underground, and who keeps the most rigid rules of conspiracy. Shamir was always the one who guarded himself from provocateurs and traitors. His ideal was to create a small and limited underground.

*Another glimpse of Yitzhak Shamir appeared in the comments of journalist Amos Nvo writing in the Hebrew daily Yediot Aharonot (September 7, 1983) and excerpted below:*

... In 1943 he ordered the liquidation of his own friend in the underground, Eliyahu Giladi. Afterwards, he regretted that he and his men had not tried to assassinate Hitler.

In Lehi, people saw Giladi as a dangerous man. He was a brave man endowed with imagination, a real revolutionary. Shamir was careful and calculating. The veterans of Lehi say that the dispute between them was ideological. Giladi was threatening to murder (Moshe) Sharrett and Ben-Gurion. He threatened those who opposed him.

Shamir understood that he may bring a calamity on the underground and on the Jewish people. He therefore ordered him to be executed without trial. Only after it was done, he assembled some members of Lehi in the sand dunes of Bat Yam and told them about the affair. He said that he was prepared to stand trial for the decision taken. (Nathan) Yalin-Mor wrote that the decision and its execution were approved simultaneously.

Shamir does not like to be reminded of the affair: "This was a tragic affair, very tragic, about which it is difficult to speak. Under those circumstances we did not see any other way." This week, the veterans of the underground said that the decision to finish off Giladi was not easy for him. He fought with himself for many days. They say that he is slow in his decision-making, he debates with himself, coldly considering the situation while dissociating himself from emotion, but when he had decided no one will change his mind. To his comrades he said: "I am fully behind the deed."

When he was already the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs, a play was given in "Tzavta" club, called "A Farewell Party for a Gunman." The two actors, Asi Haregbi and Dinah Limon wrote a play about the member of an underground who is being nominated minister in the Likud government. His friends are giving a farewell party for him before he enters upon his new duties. During the party a stranger appears and compels "Yoseph" to own that he had killed "Banquo." "Yoseph" stood for Shamir; "Banquo" was Giladi.

Members of Lehi say this is not true. Shamir never shot any man, they said this week. Yafa Unger, the sister of Giladi, and Shoshana Gefner, his niece, have repeatedly asked Shamir to reveal the truth about the affair, so that the family will have at least a tomb to visit. Also, Yossi Sarid, MK, has

approached Shamir, but he is silent. . . .

### Gaining Land But Losing Soul?

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*Distinguished Israeli scientist and author, Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, who is also well known as an outspoken critic of successive Israeli governments, recently published a powerful indictment of Israeli society and the road taken by the Jewish state, particularly since the 1967 war. His article, which appeared in the daily Haaretz (September 16, 1983), is reprinted in full below:*

Searching our hearts on the eve of the Jewish year 5744, in the 36th year of the State of Israel, the central theme of our discussion does not present itself through the Lebanese war, the first results of which are already becoming clear, though its end cannot yet be foreseen. Instead, we are bound to turn to those phenomena of which the war was nothing but an unavoidable result.

About 15 years ago, some two years after the Six Day War, when the vast majority of Israelis, and even considerable sections of Diaspora Jewry, were affected by ravenous nationalist bragging and arrogance over military achievements, by fantasies of the "might, heroism, glory, eternity and splendor" of messianic salvation, I plucked up courage to express in speeches and articles my apprehension lest the glorious victory bringing about the conquest (or the "liberation") of the whole land of Eretz Israel (Palestine) and even of the peninsula of Sinai, mark in the eyes of the future historian the onset of the process of Israel's decline and collapse. It was evident to me that it is not the territories which count but the people populating them, the people we are trying to subjugate. I claimed that incorporating 1.5 million Arabs into the

sphere of Israeli rule, in addition to its half million Arab citizens, was bound to invalidate its nature as a Jewish state, that such a reality is bound to remove the State of Israel both from the history of the Jewish people and from the Jews of the whole world, to undermine the democratic and social bases of our society, to deform the personality of the Jewish citizen who has thus become a colonialist conqueror, and to frustrate any prospect of reconciliation (or "co-existence") with that world in whose midst we are condemned to exist, and that acting in this way would engender still more all-out wars, until the war of extermination against the whole Arab world. (Don't let us console ourselves with the observation that there is an inner schism within the Arab nation. That schism is no more critical than the one within our own ranks.) In the war that cannot but break out in the wake of our dominating the Palestinian people, the whole world's sympathy will be with the Arabs.

At that time, almost no section of Israeli society understood this apprehension. These days, however, I am virtually flooded with letters and the visits of Jews from all political camps (most of them youngsters), expressing their distress, and sometimes even despair, at what they recognize as our present political and social reality, at what they feel about this reality. They choose to talk to me because I was one of the first to express what they are only recognizing and feeling now.

The crucial date in the history of the State of Israel in the first generation of its existence was the "seventh day": the day following the Six Day War. On that day we had to decide (and it was in our power to decide), whether that war was going to be defensive or a war of conquest. *Post factum*, retroactively, we turned it into a war of conquest, deciding that rule through conquest, not peace, represents