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Holy Land smells a new conspiracy

By Grace Halsell

Special to Saudi Gazette

SINCE 1967, when Israeli soldiers militarily seized control of Arab East Jerusalem, the Zionists increasingly have trampled upon the unique character of the Holy City of Al Quds. They consistently lay siege — with intent to destroy — the Noble Sanctuary, Al-Haram Al-Sharif, with its Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was the first Qibla of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad made his nocturnal Journey to Heaven from the site of the Dome of the Rock. Since the normal Islamic rite of the Haj is totally complete when a Muslim prays in Jerusalem, Muslim pilgrims over centuries have devoutly journeyed to Al-Quds, one of the three most holy cities of Islam.

The city contains hundreds of tombs of well-known Muslims, companions of the Prophet and scholars esteemed by the faithful, as well as mosques and religious schools.

Al-Haram Al-Sharif — holy to about one billion Muslims in 40 countries around the world — dominates the skyline of the old walled city. Militant Jewish terrorists, supported by Christian Zionists, plot to eradicate the Islamic Shrine — a plot that could well trigger a world conflagration.

It was in 1979 that I first heard Jewish settlers illegally encamped on West Bank Palestinian lands quite openly discuss plans to destroy the mosque. While staying in the homes of Gush Emunim or Bloc of the Faithful settlers in their strange ghettos, protected by high barbed wire fences, search beams and armed sentries, I listened as they boasted of breaking laws and creating new "facts."

If destroying the mosque to build a temple creates a big war, "then so be it," Gush settlers, many of them from America, told me. As "pioneers" with

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organise and served as Chairman for the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Co-operation. He was assisted by Douglas Krieger as executive director, and an American rabbi, David Ben-Ami, closely linked with Ariel Sharon, as present.

Additionally Risenhoover served as chairman of the board for the Jerusalem Temple Foundation, and as his international secretary for this foundation he chose Stanley Goldfoot, regarded by some people as a terrorist. Goldfoot, who emigrated in the 1930s from South Africa to Palestine, became a member of the notorious Stern gang, which shocked the world with its massacres of Arab men, women and children. Such figures as David Ben-Gurion denounced the gang as Nazis and outlawed them.

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Although Stanley Goldfoot, one of the Israelis most intent on building a temple, does not believe in God or sacred aspects of the Talmud, he and his associates justify their militant plans to take over

This is a continuation of the article published on January 2, 1989 under the title of "Liberal Jews bewildered and uneasy."

News Analysis By Mark Bruzonsky

Special to Saudi Gazette

"A movement has begun and will not stop," says one of the best-known American Jews about recent developments in and with the PLO. The "new language" of Yasser Arafat is "important" continues this staunchly Israel-oriented public figure who in 1986 won the Nobel Peace Prize but who has never been known in the past for being very sensitive to Palestinians. "I am ready to respond to any invitation extended to me by either party (Israel or the PLO) to go there to encourage peace," concludes Jewish holocaust historian Elie Wiesel in a recent interview quoted a major newspaper here.

Events of recent months, grafted on top of all that has happened over the past ten years starting with Menachem Begin's Likud victory in Israel in 1977 and climaxing with Israel's invasion of Lebanon in '82, have driven American Jews to a kind of powerful yet confused and insecure impotence. The community continues to act its macho role and its Capitol Hill lobby continues to frighten members of Congress into obedience, but the increasing reality is that the American Jewry, less than 3 percent of the US population, knows it has lost its way and can feel all around it major changes taking place which it doesn't know.

THE Tikkun Magazine conference last month in New York was but one visible sign of the tension and splintering. Far more uneasiness exists under the surface and manifests itself in a variety of public ways, including a new surge of discussions that AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee which is the heart of "The Jewish Lobby" in Washington, is out of control.

This basic insecurity is reflected in Wiesel's turn-around on the PLO of course, just as it was by the way in which American Jewry went into a rage over the "Who is a Jew?" issue when

but a handful of persons would have actually been affected. Furthermore, the leadership of the "organised community" — the Israeli-certified leadership it should be added — is very much aware that half of the flock doesn't follow orders anymore; which is precisely why new efforts are underway to block the new groups from coming forward and demonstrating the confusion in the halls of American power.

The traditional organisations and structures lack both authority and credibility — at least for a growing and vocal minority. In the aftermath of World War II's devastation and the relative powerlessness of the war years, American Jewry built itself various temples of authority and power. It is these aging institutions which have been slowly decaying in recent years, even while to outsiders the image has been that of unchecked influence and towering institutional structures.

Many causes are involved, of course, including many that have to do with the evolution and changes within American society and the coming to age of a new generation of American Jews freed from many of the myths and idolatries of their elders. Furthermore, of course, after years of defending Israeli abuses and duplicity, the American Jewish community is growing tired while at the same time losing its own sense of self.

Future weeks are now likely to see a series of continuing repercussions that have begun rippling through American Jewry in an associated phenomena to the political fracturing and polarisation that has been taking place in Israel itself. Whatever the final results of the 1988 Arafat peace offensive, the Fatah majority in the PLO has indeed finally found a method of serious confrontation that is within their power and resources — and the courting of different groups of American Jews, as well as Israelis, is part of the gameplan.

Just as the "intifada" has come to symbolise the considerable power of a peoples' rebellion against military occupation, the PLO peace offensive is pitting public relations and rhetoric against a powerful war machine

and one of the world's most accomplished intelligence services and covert operations organisation. These methods alone are unlikely to achieve independent Palestinian Statehood for the Palestinians; but they may well be the precursor and the prerequisite to the ability to push in other ways for that result in coming years.

The beatings, the demolitions, the killings ... all on evening television and morning newspapers. American Jewry is in a crisis at least partially because its values and beliefs are being publicly (and repeatedly) exposed as hypocritical and misguided in so far as the commitment to Israel is concerned. The "intifada," and Israel's ongoing suppression of it, have brought these realities home as never before for many around the world, including many American Jews.

As a result in future weeks it is likely the next level of Jewish personalities will be getting further involved, coming out of the closet if you will, with persons in the PLO, and maybe Arafat himself. The names of intellectual Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, former President of the American Jewish Congress and Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress; Philip Klutznick, one of the giants who founded the Jewish Lobby, who in the 50s headed B'nai B'rith International and the 70s. The World Jewish Congress, who served as Secretary of Commerce during the Carter Administration; Elie Wiesel; these are all among those who may soon take public steps. More will follow.

A group organising around University of Maryland Philosophy Professor Jerome Segal has announced creation of an alternate Jewish lobby Jews designed to give support to the two-state solution and undermine claims of AIPAC to be representing all American Jews.

Tikkun Magazine itself, headquartered in California, has announced somewhat Vague Plans to set up a Washington-based "public affairs council" as an alternative to established Jewish organisations. This council is to favour creation of a "demilitarised Palestinian State" through negotiations between

Israel and the PLO.

Another group, this one with American Jewish professors at over a hundred universities throughout the country, has more boldly called for "dissociation of the United States from Israel's policies" by suspension or reduction of aid. The Jewish Committee On The Mid-east — JCOME — has gone so far as to call for an end to the "special relationship" between the US and Israel as a precondition for a true Mid-east peace.

And even some establishment organisations, including B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Congress, and the American Jewish Committee, have been grumbling in public that they need more representation in Washington because they aren't always in agreement with AIPAC's policies or "style."

Another group, New Jewish Agenda, a membership organisation with local chapters throughout the country, has been tortuously debating for months whether to call for a reduction of aid to Israel.

And well-known actor Edward Asner has just sent out a letter appealing support for the small Israeli English language publication, NEW OUTLOOK, which announced in Jerusalem this week that it will co-sponsor a March New York conference with the Palestinian publication AL FAJR at which Israeli Knesset and PLO members are supposed to meet. A number of American Jews, including some of those who were part of the Stockholm Jewish delegation, are working on this; and behind the scenes Israelis, American Jews, and PLO persons have already met to begin organising the conference.

New forces are in motion. The "intifada" and Yasser Arafat are the primary catalysts. The Palestinians may still be a long way from an independent Palestinian State, and no doubt the current Israeli government is likely planning major steps to attempt to terminate this increasingly uncomfortable situation. But the Palestinians, after years of internal confusion and despair of their own, have now set in motion a chain of events which is pushing and shoving everyone in its wake.