
INTERVIEW

Yigal Laviv targets the Israeli Mafia

Israeli journalist Yigal Laviv, a well-known investigator of the Mafia in Israel, is now probing the attempt by Israeli collaborators of American mobster Meyer Lansky to take over the state of Israel.

It is the underworld that stands behind Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's efforts to wrest power from ailing Prime Minister Menachem Begin. According to Israeli intelligence sources, Sharon is owned and controlled by Meshulam Riklis, the Israeli-American head of the Rapid-American Corporation who is reputed to be tied into the Lansky crime combine.

Over the past decade, Laviv has authored numerous books on the Israeli Mafia, providing much of the source material for the 1980 French-language exposé *The Israeli Connection* by Jacques Derogy.

Because of his revelations, Laviv has received death threats from Israeli crime circles. In late February he was arraigned on spurious charges of extortion trumped up by the Israeli Mafia. Several organized crime bosses, including the notorious Samuel Flatto-Sharon, who evaded extradition to his native France several years ago by buying himself a seat in the Israeli Knesset, are implicated in the operation to silence Laviv.

In 1972, charges of extortion were brought against Laviv by underworld figures in Israel, but the charges did not hold up and he was acquitted. In 1973, the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the decision.

In an interview with *EIR's* Wiesbaden correspondents Mark Burdman and Philip Golub, Laviv indicated that the campaign against him is being waged by people deeply involved in the international drug trade. Evidence for this, Laviv states, comes partly from Federal Bureau of Investigation documents on Israeli Mafia drug-trafficking into the United States from South America, documents that Laviv himself has seen but that have been suppressed from public purview in America.

Laviv is editor of the Israeli monthly *One Hundred—Police News*. He is former columnist for the newspaper *Haolam Ha'zeh*, and former economics reporter for the

Israeli daily *Haaretz*.

Portions of the *EIR* interview with Laviv appear below.

EIR: Mr. Laviv, *EIR* has been very active in attacking some of the same people in the Israeli Mafia that you yourself have been going after. You recently have had some problems with the Mafia in Israel, around a frame-up arrest you've been faced with. We have heard that as many as 12 Mafia groups may be involved in the operation against you.

Laviv: The 12 are not all involved—only four or five of them are. They have gone to the police with false charges against me and have been trying to get me arrested. All these men are partners of and affiliated with the famous 11 Mafia groups of Israel. These 11 groups have been known to the police for four to five years, and are the leaders of organized crime in Israel.

EIR: Do you think that these Mafia groups are involved in the international drug trade?

Laviv: Yes, definitely. They are involved in smuggling heroin, marijuana, and hashish, and then transporting it from Israel and the Middle East into the United States.

EIR: Is your life endangered? Is the Mafia threatening your life?

Laviv: They tried in the past, and they also sent me messages two weeks ago that I shall be dead in one month.

EIR: Could you tell us some of the names of the Mafia groups going against you?

Laviv: One of the main people involved is Bezael Mizrahi. There are two affiliated with him—Tuvia Oshri and Rahamin Aharoni. There is also a guy named Munia Shapira, who is also mentioned by the police in the 11 groups. Now there is also another guy, who was not mentioned in the 11 groups, because in those days no one knew about him. He's linked to construction, to the building business. His name is Shalom Genish. He's the partner of Mizrahi in the construction business; they're involved in hotels.

EIR: We understand that Sharon is presently attempting to seize power over the government in Israel, a move that would lead to a major conflict with the Arab world.

Laviv: I think yes, because he wants to conquer all of Lebanon. Sharon wants to make a war in Lebanon and force Egypt to cut the peace agreement with Israel before Israel gives back Sinai.

EIR: Do you think there is a possibility of a cold coup d'état by Sharon?

Laviv: Not as long as Mr. Begin is alive.