BY FRANK GERVASI

In the Holy Land are two organizations—the Stern Gang and the NMO—the members of which employ kidnapping, extortion and murder to gain their ends: civil war and independence for Palestine. Here Collier's correspondent reports what and what they are to themselves. In the end they were tried—and not British.

In one sense, however, Hakim and Bet-Toury succeeded. They indirectly but effectually brought Palestine to public notice. The whole world, while the Jews had called, "the Jewish question," had been shoved into the background by the war. Statesmen, Balfour and others, had been dominated by the political and diplomatic problems of the war, and had not been in listless, fragment Cairo last November.

But Lord Moyne wasn't an actor and he didn't pay much attention to the Jewish question.

On the afternoon of November 6, 1944, while Cairo lay in its customary midday torpor, Lord Moyne was shot and killed by two assassins hiding in the shrubbery of his modern Mediterranean villa. The shots mortally wounded Moyne, killed his soldier-chauveleur outright and almost literally echoed around the world. They were intended to be fired by Jewish terrorists.

The killers were Eliahuah Hakim and Elihuah Bet-Toury. They were respectively, members of the so-called Stern Gang, the smaller but more virulent of two terrorist organizations operating in Palestine. They were captured by an Arab policeman. Egyptian tried, prosecuted, defended, judged and sentenced the pair of young killers to death by hanging. They received, according to the law, what they deserved.

Their fate wasn't, however, solve the problem of terrorism in Palestine. Much less will it solve the greater problem of Palestine itself a territory about one and again as large as Massachusetts, which the League of Nations mandated to Great Britain after the last war.

Hakim and Bet-Toury's confessed motive for the murder of Moyne was to arouse world opinion against Palestine. From the witness stand in his murder trial in Cairo, Lord Moyne, Hakim and Bet-Toury, carefully briefed by their terrorist leaders in what to say and how to act, told the world the story of the death of Lord Moyne. The correspondents covering the trial for the world press were not permitted to report what Hakim and Bet-Toury said. They weren't even allowed to make notes.

The killers sought to put Great Britain's imperial prestige to the test. Their trial at a critical moment in world history. Because of censorship, the young terrorists failed in their propagandism mission and so wasted the lives of Moyne, his driver and themselves.
Palestine is the scene of almost constant clashes between Arabs and Jews. Here Jews answer Arab rifle fire in the town of Safad, one of the country's hottest spots

Whether or not the Balfour Declaration legally permits unlimited Jewish immigration is another matter. Any good Zionist lawyer can find words in Balfour's historic paragraph to mean yes, and his Arab counterpart can find some to mean no. Until some legal genius comes along with a solution, the problem remains and the conflict continues.

The conflict actually is nearing a climactic explosion as dangerous to peace in the Middle East and to United Nations unity as the one which flared in Syria and Lebanon a few weeks ago. Behind the Jewish agitation is a desire for creation of an independent Palestine. Denied representation at the San Francisco Conference, Jewish hopes of achieving independence through political and diplomatic means have nearly expired.

David Ben Gurion, chief of the executive body of the Jewish Agency, has warned Prime Minister Winston Churchill that Jewish patience is at an end and that the Jews may resort to "direct means" at any moment. If current last-minute efforts to obtain a pacific solution in Palestine fail then a general strike, violence and revolution can be expected.

Of the world's 17,000,000 Jews some 5,000,000 have been slaughtered in Europe by the Nazis. The Jews count their dead, measure their war effort in the soldiers they've given to the common cause, the money and (Continued on page 64)

Dr. Chaim Weizmann, head of the Jewish Agency, is admired by British and Jews alike. He is sure that extremist acts of terrorists postpone settlement of Jewish question
Terror in Palestine

-the third of four pages-

work they've contributed and feel that they have a right to this information. They seem, from all reports and indications, to be ready to fight for what they believe. They are predominantly Arab, the majority of them young. The Terrorists have preached "direct action" for years.

Both the Stern Gang and its bigger brother, the Irgun Zevi Leumi, or National Military Organization, seek to foment civil war and eventual civil war with the help of Britain's "terrorist solution" for the Palestine prob-

lem. Ultimately the objective of the Zionists and of Arab terrorists is the complete overthrow of Palestin-

ian authority. But whereas the Zionists hope to accomplish it through legal, democratic, po-

litical means, the terrorists use violence, NAZI tactics and demand a short cut. They want to throw the British out by force and to establish a Jewish Free State. They're the Sinn Feiners of Jewry which created the Irgun-Zevi, the present leader of the Stern Gang, is a square-

faced, blue-eyed fanatic who has transplanted to Palestine the gangster tactics of the Cap-

one and the O'Bannions of our terrible twent-

ies.

Yet neither Friedman-Yellin nor Menachim Begin, the skinny, pasty-faced former law student who heads the other terrorist organ-

ization, are ready to throw in their lot with a band of bloodthirsty thugs. Maybe they are per-

sonally, and so are a good many of their fellow terrorists, but, as a group of men, they believe that the terrorists are misguided, fanatic patriots, and their methods must be seen against the back-

ground of their struggle to save the Jewish people in the face of the British. The Stern Gang Jews were forced to sit on their hands while their relatives in Europe were slaughtered or left in ghettos, in Nazi death camps, to starve and suffer and feed, with people less willing to help them now than ever. Much of Hitler's madness has been shared by the Stern Gang as far as the British are concerned. When they know in Palestine, didn't live then, of the defeat of the Nazis.

The Stern Gang was organized some years ago—nobody seems to know just when—by a Polish Jew named Abraham Ben Morde-

chai Stern. The gang grew out of a secret society, the Fighters for Freedom of Israel, a small group of desper-

droms and jailbirds specializing in indi-

vidual action. They were organized for the attempt on former High Commissi-

oner MacMichael last summer, and for killing Assistant Superintendent of Police.

Wilkins. The gang's business is murder. Its leader learned the trade in tough schools—
prewar Polish ghettos and Passaic, New Jersey.

An Admiral of Il Duce

A Zionist who knew Stern described him to me as an able, single-minded and singu-

larly stubborn man. He arrived in Palestine from a German university and five years later founded the "Irgun" and two secondary schools and the university in Jerusa-

lem and then went to Poland and later to Italy where he became an admiral of Ben Mussolini.

"The British are our enemy as much as the Germans," he often said. "The Germans kill Jews, and the British don't do anything to save them." He lived by this credo, made it the battle cry of his small, mobile band. On the softer side, Stern wrote creditable poetry and was married to a professional pianist. He was one of the few men to argue with him politically but loved him devotedly. He allowed himself a salary of only six pounds sterling (about $24) a month.

The Stern Gang is organized with the emphasis on secrecy. No member is supposed to know more than a handful of the others. Less than 10 per cent of the members are Palestinian born, many of them being Polish Jews, although there is an element of Jewish business activity and prewar anti-Semitism in Poland are many and curious. Stern had organized a revolutionary secret society in Poland. When he came to Palestine, he was a member of the Polish army. Captured by the Russians on the Eastern-

front, they were released and made their way to Palestine. Stern and his men, the Stern Gang members deserted the Polish army and rejoined the terrorists.

Stern was killed in 1942, when he was about 35 years old, while he was hiding in a house in Tel Aviv. To the terrorists he is a martyr who must be avenged. Stern left to Friedman-Yellin a gang numbering some 40 to 30 so-called "front men" or trigger men, all of whom were his personal assistants of one kind and another, including expert pamphletpackers.

The Stern Gang and the stronger of the two terrorist groups is the National Military Organization. The NMO recently split with the Stern Gang because of the leg-

art of guerrilla warfare, sabotage and terror-

ism. How many have been graduated from the Stern Gang to the NMO is not known but it is generally agreed that the NMO is able to estimate the organization's strength with some accuracy told me in Cairo that it is around 200 active men. It has around 400 trigger men and at least 2,000 "helpers."

While the Sternists single out key men for their terror tactics, the National Military Organization, through a front group, the Palestine Party, acts directly at the British administration's insti-

tution in Palestine. One organization supple-

ments the work of the other, but whereas the Stern hoodlums seem to be satisfied with the mardymen, the NMO boys are far more ambitious. They don't want to die fighting. They want to live victoriously. They want to rule Palestine.

Terrorism with Limitations

Less extreme than the Sternists, the mem-

bers of NMO try to avoid committing any act that might win sympathy for their move-

ment. In their pamphlets and propag-

adas, for instance, they urged Jews to join the "men of the sword" but never to kill an Englishman or to blow up a building. Simplicity, one could say, is their weapon. They even drew up a list of "do's and don'ts" for their men.

The list is unusually long and detailed. It covers every imaginable possibility, but what it boils down to is the following:

1. The headquarters of the Palestine government's Immigration Department as a protest against the White Paper is a "do."

2. The White Paper to plant bombs in the head-

quarters of the Palestine police, enforcers of the British military government is a "don't."

3. Blackmailing the British military police when ever actual British troops or British police might become involved in a terroristic action is a "do."

4. "Helping" them tip them off by telephone.

A source of power for the NMO is the Palestine police. These men are not British police, but that section of the Police army known as the Dwoika, or secret service. The links between the Sternists and the police, those that exist, states Stern, are really loose. Stern says the Sternists and the police have had to separate themselves so as not to be involved in the British military government. They have been "tipped off" for the police, for the Sternists, don't want to blow up the British government's building or make a terrorist action that will lead to a general war in Palestine. They have been "tipped off" by the police, for the Sternists, don't want to blow up the British government's building or make a terrorist action that will lead to a general war in Palestine.

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Poles furnished the NMO: (1) instructors to teach terrorists how to use firearms and explosives; (2) transportation of weapons and explosives in Polish military staff cars; (3) refuge in their military camps for NMO members sought by the police. It was a simp- ple matter for the Poles to detach officers for "special duty," and an undeterminable number were in the NMO to direct and lead the terrorists. British Palestine po- lice, searching for weapons and dynamite, could never get evidence of or equip- ment in regular Polish army vehicles, and they didn't even think of looking for escaped terrorists in Polish battle dress in Polish army camps.

The British eventually realized what was going on. The Poles made it plain that they were cross with the British, that they were being     threatened by the Allies over the Alli- unity with Russia. When the British dug into the causes of Polish rancor, they uncov- ered, among other things, the links between the Poles and the NMO, but by this time the harm had been done. Between the arrival of the first refugee Poles in 1941-1942 and June of 1944, the rhythm of NMO and Szemir terrorist inci- dents. On May 18, 1944, three truckloads of armed terrorists invaded the Palestine Broadcasting System's station at Ramallah, near Jerusalem, in order to drive to the NMO camps to the terrorists. The police arrested hun- dreds of suspects. Zionist organizations and the Jewish Agency interpreted this incident as a land-wide manhunt, but terrorism continued, practically unchecked.

By then, October less than a month before    Hakim and Bet-Touri fired their fatal 30m at Moyne, terrorism and repressive measures had reached a fearful climax. Raids on settlements where terrorists might be har- boured were an everyday occurrence. On Octo- ber 26th, for instance, the village of Nathanya was raided by police and military authorities, 650 Jewish children were intercrogated, 59 were detained. Another 900 were questioned the next day and 22 arrested. About 300 ar- rested suspects were shipped to concentra- tion camps in distant Eretz and Khartoum. The deportations around the New Zian- ism Party's anger. The NMO, it seems, was confused with the Zionists) are an offshoot of the old Revisionist Party founded in 1929 by the late Moshe Shein. They are anti-British, and re- grettably, they are anti-Semitic.

In view of the situation, it was surprising that Lord Moyne was not better guarded than he was. In Cairo, in those days, I talked with the Jewish Agency executives about what might happen in Palestine. They were worried and depressed. One of them said, sadly, "The present state of affairs cannot endure. Organized elements of the Zionist movement are placed in the position where they will need to act against the terrorists—and soon."

To act against the terrorists means that decent Jews must turn informers against their own people. Informers in any such situ- ation are dangerous people, and no matter how many they may help to expose the violence of the terrorists, the Jews themselves are the ones who will be killed. The Zionists are the members of the NMO are fighting, ultimately, their fight. They are reluctant to turn in.

Police in Name Only

The Jews obtain little help from the highly touted Palestine Police, composed largely of Palestinian Jews but with some Arab mem- bers. In spite of handsome publicity to the contrary, they are about as inefficient a po- lice force as is possible to find any- where. The Zionists blame much of the terrorism on their laxity. They allowed some 20 known terrorists, for example, to escape, with the help of the Arab Police. At least, their lack of cooperation and their failure to control the terrorists are  no longer remote. It will happen if and when all other means, political and diplo- matic, are exhausted. There is a growing volunteer, men and women, for the British army. All received expert military training. It is conceivable that the terrorist movement, rather than the passive attitude of the Zionists may prevail. The appointment of Lord Gort, Chief of the Imperial High Com- missioner of Palestine in the pale of Sir Hervy Mas-Michael, indicates that British are determined to keep the Jews in Palestine. Their experience in Greece was a bad one; a similar occurrence in Palestine would be much worse.

In the event of an armed uprising of Jews to obtain a national home in Palestine, it is no longer remote. It will happen if and when all other means, political and diplo- matic, are exhausted. There is a growing volunteer, men and women, for the British army. All received expert military training. It is conceivable that the terrorist movement, rather than the passive attitude of the Zionists may prevail. The appointment of Lord Gort, Chief of the Imperial High Com- missioner of Palestine in the pale of Sir Hervy Mas-Michael, indicates that British are determined to keep the Jews in Palestine. Their experience in Greece was a bad one; a similar occurrence in Palestine would be much worse.

But I tried reasoning with him.

THE END