

54 SOLDIERS KILLED WHEN THEIR HELICOPTER CRASHES AND EXPLODES

Worst Aviation Disaster In Israel's History; Enemy Activity Ruled Out
By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, May 11 (JTA)--A troop-carrying helicopter crashed and exploded last night killing all 54 officers, soldiers and airmen aboard. It was the worst aviation disaster in Israel's history. An official investigation was launched almost immediately. Chief of Staff Gen. Mordechai Gur said today that enemy activity was ruled out as a cause and the investigators are concentrating on technical failure or human error.

The crash occurred in the Jordan Valley near Jericho during annual military exercises at about 8:40 p.m. local time. It involved a giant American-made Sikorsky C-53 helicopter, the type used by U.S. forces in Vietnam, which can lift 5 1/2 tons and 60 fully-equipped troops and is regarded as highly reliable.

The aircraft was the last of a formation to take off and was airborne for only a few minutes and not more than two kilometers from its departure point when the ground crew saw it come down. The tragedy was announced this morning after next of kin were notified. Funeral services will be held tomorrow.

According to eye-witnesses, the take-off was normal. They said the helicopter circled once and headed eastward when it began to lose altitude for reasons unknown. It hit the ground on a rough plateau and burst into flame. Rescue squads and fire-fighters who rushed to the scene found signs that the landing wheels had touched the ground and skidded several score yards before the helicopter exploded.

No Indication Of Trouble

According to the ground crew, the helicopter pilot was in radio communication with his base and gave no indication of trouble before hitting the ground. The pilot, who was not immediately identified by name, was described as a 25-year-old reserve officer who was a student at the Haifa Technion. Military sources said he was a highly competent helicopter veteran who logged 1500 hours flight time including 1100 hours in the C-53.

Dispatchers, who registered every piece of equipment before take-off, said the helicopter was not overloaded. There was speculation that a hand grenade or other explosive carried by the fully armed troops may have detonated by accident. Special ordnance experts attached to the investigating team are looking into that possibility. The victims' next of kin were notified promptly because of the army rule that all personnel boarding an aircraft must sign a register.

The Defense Minister, the Chief of Staff and the Air Force Commander visited the scene shortly after the disaster. Gur appointed the investigating commission headed by Gen. Avraham Orly, which began almost immediately to inspect the debris. Flags flew at half mast at all military and air bases today.

The tragedy marred celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the re-unification of Jerusalem

scheduled for today. All entertainment events were cancelled. Israel's elections, less than a week off, were forgotten temporarily. A television debate between Labor Party leader Shimon Peres and Likud leader Menachem Begin, scheduled for tomorrow, was postponed until Sunday.

VANCE TO ALLON: U.S. WILL NOT ALTER ARMS POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL AND WILL ADHERE TO 'SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP'

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, May 11 (JTA)--Cyrus Vance, the U.S. Secretary of State, declared today that the U.S. would adhere to "our special relationship" with Israel and denied that Washington would impose a Middle East settlement or alter its arms supply policies to Israel's detriment.

He was speaking in the presence of Yigal Allon, Israel's Foreign Minister, after a lengthy luncheon meeting at the United States Embassy. Allon told reporters that he regarded Vance's statement as "a very positive definition of the United States role."

Referring to what he termed "speculation in some newspapers," Vance said that President Carter and he himself had said that a settlement "must be determined by the parties to the conflict in discussions among themselves," and that the U.S. would work with the parties to that end.

He also discounted "speculation" about Arab plans for a Palestinian West Bank state in exchange for Israeli recognition by the Palestine Liberation Organization. Vance said "no specific proposals have been made by either side at this time," although he said he hoped that at a later date there would be specific proposals. Nor did the United States intend to come out with a plan of its own, but was intent on using its good offices to help promote a settlement, he said.

On reports that Israel would cease to receive "preferential" treatment on arms supplies, Vance said the "special relationship" with the Jewish State would continue, since the Carter Administration was "committed to the security of Israel." The U.S. would make sure Israel received the defense articles she required, including advanced technology items, Vance stated.

Asked to define "special relationship," Vance said: "We were at the outset of Israel's birth one of those who helped to bring it into being. We have been very close to Israel. We share the same values and we share the same hopes and aspirations."

Allon: Ready To Give Peace A Chance

Allon, who was asked whether he shared President Carter's view that the present Arab leaders were "moderate," pointed out that so far Israel was the only party to the conflict to have declared its readiness to compromise over territory in return for a lasting peace. If it had been up to Israel, he said, "the Geneva conference would have been reconvened long ago."

Unlike Carter, Allon said he had not met the Arab leaders concerned. "But I am ready to give them a chance to prove their moderation round the conference table," he added. At today's luncheon meeting, which lasted for 2 1/2 hours,

the American and Israeli leaders reviewed American contracts with the Arab states, which, Vance said, were all "part of our continuing search for a just and lasting peace." When the present round of contacts are over, Vance will go back to the area.

Also at today's luncheon were Simcha Dinitz, the Israeli Ambassador to the U.S., and Ephraim Evron, assistant director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Later, Allon met with British Prime Minister James Callaghan and Foreign Secretary David Owen. This morning, he met Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, leader of the opposition Conservative Party. Allon will breakfast tomorrow with Anglo-Jewish leaders and hold a press conference before leaving London.

CAREY ATTACKS BOYCOTT

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--Gov. Hugh Carey last night denounced the Arab boycott as "a subtle form of economic terrorism that threatens the moral fabric of our nation." Noting that New York State passed an anti-boycott law, he stressed that a strong federal law was needed, something which he said Congress was in the process of enacting.

"This law will send a message with a single national voice to those who support the boycott," Carey told some 400 persons attending an inaugural appeal dinner of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith at the Waldorf-Astoria. "We will not tolerate international economic warfare against Israel, nor will we allow other countries to engage in discriminatory practices against American citizens and businesses."

Carey called upon "national leaders everywhere, and business and union leaders, to resist the Arab boycott by every peaceful and legal means." He urged the Arab leaders "to end their boycott of Israel in the spirit of the three courageous Arab ambassadors who helped negotiate a peaceful solution to the recent terror in Washington where, among other buildings, the headquarters of B'nai B'rith was occupied."

AZF TRIBUNAL RULES AGAINST API

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--A dispute within the American Zionist Federation over the system adopted for the election of American delegates to the next World Zionist Congress has been settled by a special AZF tribunal. In the first meeting of the tribunal to adjudicate a challenge by the Americans for Progressive Israel (API) of the election procedure, a majority of the tribunal voted to uphold the AZF's Area Election Committee's (AEC) decision of last February.

The decision at that time was that 55 percent of the delegates would be determined by direct, ballot, elections by members of the AZF's constituent Zionist organizations and 45 percent would be allocated to the organizations on the basis of their certified membership. There will be 152 delegates from the U.S. to the Congress scheduled to be held in Jerusalem in February, 1978.

Says Democratic Norms Violated

The tribunal's decision followed a hearing on the challenge by the API which charged that the present election procedure "violates accepted democratic norms and thus is injurious to the Zionist movement both internally and in its public image."

Bernard Harkavy, attorney for the API, in his statement before the tribunal during which only five of the nine attorneys participated, argued that

the dual system for electing delegates "would work out that large organizations with substantial numbers of dormant but dues-paying members would benefit" while "smaller groups with higher percentages of active members would gain stronger representation if there were a strictly 'one person, one vote' system."

Harkavy also pointed out that "granting organizational allocations is deleterious to the democratic process because many people belong to various constituent organizations simultaneously." He added that the present system was "undemocratic" because it negated a section of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) constitution which mandates elections "in accordance with a method consistent with generally accepted democratic principles." The API, he said, interprets this as meaning elections by a one-person, one-vote system.

Notes Legality Was Sustained

Martin Markson, attorney for the AZF, claimed that the legality of the dual election system was sustained by the Zionist Congress Court in 1971 which said that "it is permissible to take into account the particular circumstances" that obtained in a given country with respect to determining the electoral system. Markson likened the AEC's decision to the system that applied to the U.S. where the membership of one branch of government "is based on equal representation for each constituent element while the other reflects the popular electoral strength among the people."

Sam Rothstein, who chaired the tribunal but did not participate in its ruling, summed up the tribunal's majority decision by saying that the API case was dismissed because the panel was "convinced" that elections based on a 45/55 distribution are democratic considering the nature of the Zionist movement. "The tribunal," he stated, "cannot and will not mandate that all delegates will be elected by direct vote."

Herbert Dubno, who issued a dissenting opinion, said the WZO constitution describes only two permissible methods of elections--"proportional representation" or "personal elections." Therefore, he said, the tribunal should grant API's request to annul the election procedure and require it to select between either one system or the other. Dubno added that he found "insufficient similarity" between the American electoral system Markson had referred to "and the nationwide elections required for the delegates to the World Zionist Congress."

AZF president Faye Schenk hailed the tribunal's ruling as "vindicating the majority-approved method of the AEC." She commended the API, however, "for submitting its complaint to the Zionist Tribunal." In addition to Dubno, the other attorneys who participated in the tribunal were Brooklyn District Attorney Eugene Gold, Saul Kies, Helen Lusterman and Nathaniel Zelikow.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Aviad Yaffe has begun his work as Director General of the Jewish Agency. He replaced Moshe Rivlin, who became chairman of the Jewish National Fund Directorate. Yaffe, 54, has been a Knesset member since 1972, but he is not running for the next Knesset so he can "devote his time to the new position," he said. Since 1971 he served as coordinator of funds recruiting for special projects, commonly known as the Sapir Fund, named after the late Finance Minister, Pinhas Sapir.

REPORT CATHOLIC TEXTBOOKS NOW HAVE MORE POSITIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT JEWS, JUDAISM BUT OLD NEGATIVE REFERENCES STILL PERSIST

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--Significant improvements have been made since Vatican Council II in the way Catholic textbooks describe Jews and Judaism but many of the old negative references still persist, a leading Roman Catholic educator declared today.

Dr. Eugene Fisher, in his first public appearance as the newly appointed Director of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated that although Catholic school texts now contain "numerous positive and corrective statements (about Jews)...which would have been impossible or highly improbable just a few short years ago," they retain many statements indicative of ambivalent attitudes on the part of publishers and textbook writers.

This ambivalence, he added, also exists in the attitudes of classroom teachers, with the result that young Catholics today "are not given adequate background for dialogue with American Jews." Fisher, who was formerly Consultant for Teacher Training in the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit, made his remarks at a dinner meeting of AJCommittee's Interreligious Affairs Commission, prior to the official opening tomorrow of the organization's four-day annual meeting at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel here.

"The negative stereotypes concerning Jews and Judaism have become so deeply embedded in our catechesis that, like anti-Black racism, they are difficult to spot from the inside," Fisher said.

Responding to Fisher's comments, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, AJCommittee's National Director of Interreligious Affairs, declared that "one of the most significant developments of the past decade in interreligious relations is the fact that Christian and Jewish scholars, clergy, educators and lay people are collaborating in multiple ways to overcome the destructive heritage of anti-Semitism and bigotry, and are laying foundations of a new culture of Jewish-Christian relations, whose hallmarks are mutual respect and friendship."

Cites Number Of Improvements

Fisher based his comments on his study of 15 major religion series currently in use in Catholic elementary and high schools as well as in adult education. The series covered the entire spectrum of major Roman Catholic textbook publishers in the United States, and included 153 student texts and 105 teacher manuals published between 1967 and 1975.

Among the improvements that Fisher noted in his study was the fact that such negative phrases as "Christ-killers" and "blood-thirsty Jews" have been "fairly effectively expunged" from the texts, which now use such expressions as "the enemies of Christ" and "some of the Jewish leaders" in describing the people who were involved in the crucifixion. But this is not a satisfactory solution to the problem, he maintained.

"It remains historically questionable," Fisher declared, "whether one can even blame 'some Jews' for the death of Jesus, when the deed was clearly done in a Roman manner--crucifixion--under the orders of the Roman governor--Pilate--and when the only Jews that the New Testament implicates as involved--the high priest and the Temple officials--were in fact Roman appointees susceptible of recall from Rome and not indigenous 'Jewish leaders' at all."

Another subject area in which Fisher found the beginnings of progress, especially in high school texts, was the Nazi Holocaust. "I found no less than 50 references to the Holocaust," he said. "While most used it simply as an example of human moral evil, some texts rather courageously sought to grapple with the fact of Christian involvement in and responsibility for this horror of horrors."

HOLY LAND STUDIES

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--The publication of a 72-volume reprint series called "America and the Holy Land," consisting mainly of 19th Century and early 20th Century writings on Palestine by Americans, was announced here at a meeting of the International Committee of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Institute of Contemporary Jewry.

The announcement Monday night at the offices of the American Friends of the Hebrew University was made jointly by Daniel G. Ross, chairman of the international committee, and Dr. Maurice Jacobs of the American Jewish Historical Society. The series will be published by Arno Press, a New York Times company.

The series will include one new work, "With Eyes Toward Zion," an expanded version of a "Scholars Colloquium on America-Holy Land Studies" held at the National Archives in Washington in September, 1975. It is edited by Prof. Moshe Davis, head of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry and advisory editor for the entire series.

Purpose Of Collection

"The purpose of the collection is to engage the contemporary reader in the wonder of the re-discovery of the Holy Land by the Western world in the past century," Davis told the meeting. "Out of many hundreds of books and pamphlets, we have chosen a sample of writings of archaeologists, historians, scientists, biblical scholars, novelists, American consuls, missionaries, tourists, and above all, settlers and builders of the land." Davis noted that the work falls into four categories: diplomatic policy, Christian devotion, Jewish attachment and cultural interest.

The editorial board for the series includes Dr. Robert T. Handy, academic dean and professor of church history at Union Theological Seminary; Dr. Jules Davids, professor of American history and diplomacy at Georgetown University and Dr. Nathan M. Kaganoff, librarian and editor of the American Jewish Historical Society.

In another report at the meeting, Prof. Yehuda Bauer, deputy head of the institute and director of the Department of Holocaust Studies, said two publications are expected to appear in 1978: "To Save Our Soul," which deals with the American Joint Distribution Committee's rescue attempts during the Holocaust, and "The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness."

PINHUS SZTEJNWAKS DEAD AT 72

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--Funeral services will be held tomorrow for Pinhus Szejnwaks, who formerly served the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization as a special assistant for the Yiddish press. He died yesterday at the age of 72. Szejnwaks, who was editor of the WZO's Tzion Neiss, worked for the Jewish Agency and the WZO for 25 years until his retirement in 1969. He began his lifelong career in Zionism as a member of the Labor Zionist movement in Warsaw.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES WINNERS, LOSERS AND ISSUES

By Uzi Benziman

JERUSALEM, May 11 (JTA)--With election day just six days off, political analysts here have drawn the profile of the next Knesset--the ninth--based on the latest public opinion polls and a close study of previous election returns. The consensus is that the new Knesset will consist of two major parties, two medium-sized parties and several small or splinter factions.

It will be a younger Knesset. The average age of its members is expected to drop from the early 50s to the middle 40s. Many well-known veterans will be gone and new faces will abound. There are expected to be 50-60 new MKs, including many people who never served in parliament before. Only 20-25 will be able to claim Knesset membership prior to 1973.

It will be closely divided on the issue of peace with the Arabs and territorial concessions and the split will not be entirely along party lines. The next Knesset therefore will be hard put to ensure political stability in the crucial months and years ahead, the analysts say.

Strength Of Parties Assessed

With respect to party strength, the Labor Alignment and Likud are expected to account for 80 seats between them, about two-thirds the total membership of 120. Some analysts believe a Labor-Likud coalition cannot be ruled out. According to the results of a poll published in Yediot Achronot this week, the Labor Alignment will emerge from the May 17 elections with 39-40 seats compared to 50 it holds in the present Knesset. Likud is expected to win 35-36 seats compared to 39 now.

Some analysts see the National Religious Party (NRP) and Prof. Yigal Yadin's Democratic Movement for Change (DESH) winning 20 seats between them. The Yediot Achronot poll gives DESH 15 seats (it is not represented in the outgoing Knesset) and the NRP nine, a loss of one seat for the religious party. The ultra-Orthodox Aguda bloc is expected by some to win six seats, one more than it has at present. The Yediot poll gives it five seats in the next Knesset.

The pro-Moscow Rakah Communist Party, which is running a joint list with leftist Arab factions, is given six seats by some pollsters and eight by Yediot Achronot. Rakah has four seats in the present Knesset and the Arab leftists three.

Yediot Achronot gives Gen. Ariel Sharon's new Shlomzion list two seats; the leftist Shelli two, a gain of one; the Independent Liberal Party two, a loss of two; and the Civil Rights Party one, a loss of two. According to that poll, all the other splinter factions will poll no more than 1.3 percent of the vote between them. Put another way, 16 factions will be competing for only eight seats left after the major parties and some of the stronger small factions are accounted for. About a dozen will fall by the wayside.

Some Veterans Will Be Gone

Some of Israel's best-known political personalities will be gone from the Knesset after election day. These include such influential personages as Israel Galili, Minister-Without-Portfolio in the present government and in the government of former Premier Golda Meir; Knesset Speaker Israel Yeshayahu; Israel Kargman, chairman of the Knesset's finance committee; Yosef Almogi, former Labor Minister and presently chairman of the World

Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives; and Ari Ankorian, chairman of the Knesset house committee.

Also leaving, from the ranks of Labor, will be former Histadrut chief Yitzhak Ben Aharon; Labor Minister Moshe Baram; Alignment whip Moshe Wertman; former Information Minister and army intelligence chief Gen. Aharon Yariv; and former Transport Minister Moshe Carmel. Some of these people dropped out of the Knesset race voluntarily or switched to other parties. Some were unceremoniously dumped.

The Likud Knesset faction will be without its veteran parliamentarian Dr. Yohanan Bader; Liberal Party leader Dr. Elimelech Rimalt and Shneur-Zalman Abramov, the influential lawyer and chairman of the Israel-America Friendship Association. Haim Landau, loyal lieutenant of Herut leader Menachem Beigin has dropped out of the race as has Abraham Shechterman, Israel's representative to the Council of Europe.

The NRP ousted former Religious Affairs Minister Yitzhak Raphael and the Independent Liberals are running without their veteran leader Moshe Kol who is not standing for re-election.

Who will replace the veterans? The various party lists indicate that the new generation of MKs will be comprised mainly of relatively unknown politicians who gained power through various party activities on the local level. Most of them do not possess professional credentials relative to their expected activity in the Knesset. They are not economists, lawyers, agriculturalists or specialists in any particular field.

Issues In The Campaign

Although the territorial issue generates the hottest emotions, the number one issue of concern to Israelis is inflation, which was number one in the December, 1973 elections. That was the finding of Hanoach Smith, a prominent election analyst and former director of the Manpower Planning Authority in the Labor Ministry.

Smith, who heads an economic and statistical consulting firm, also found that corruption in high places which ranked 15th in 1973 is now fourth among the major issues and strikes, which ranked second four years ago has dropped to ninth place despite the recent labor strife in Israel.

In 1973, right after the Yom Kippur War, Israelis ranked peace with the Arabs as only ninth among the election issues. Today it is second only to inflation. According to Smith, "Inflation remains the most mentioned issue, but its relative importance has declined very substantially since 1973. This is, perhaps, a bit surprising because the rate of inflation has increased rapidly since 1973," he said.

He suggested that the public has learned to live with galloping inflation and built-in mechanisms such as cost-of-living allowances and social welfare payments ease the burden. He believes that Israelis similarly have learned to live with disruptive strikes.

Smith also believes that the Labor Alignment and its traditional coalition partners, the ILP and NRP are not likely to win a majority of Knesset seats between them. Therefore, the balance of power in the next government may be held by DESH, he says. He also found that Shimon Peres, the new leader of the Labor Party, is the most popular minister in the present government.