

JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 46th Street / New York, New York 10036

Vol. LIX - 64th Year

MAR 19 1981

Tuesday, March 17, 1981

No. 52

2 NIGERIAN SOLDIERS OF UNIFIL KILLED, 11 WOUNDED IN CLASH BETWEEN CHRISTIAN FORCES AND LEBANESE ARMY REGULARS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 16 (JTA) -- Two Nigerian soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), one of them an officer, were killed today and 11 others were wounded in a heavy exchange of artillery and tank gun fire between Maj. Saad Haddad's Christian forces in south Lebanon and Lebanese army regulars who took up positions in Kantara village in the central sector of the front last week.

According to UNIFIL, two Lebanese soldiers were also wounded. Haddad's group claimed the 30 Lebanese troops who moved into the southern region were harassing villagers for alleged collaboration with the Christian forces and with Israel which supports Haddad's militia. Haddad accused UNIFIL soldiers of acting in concert with the Lebanese.

Haddad views the southward movement of the Beirut-controlled Lebanese army as a threat to his authority and warned that he would shell them if they did not retire. Israel said yesterday that it was maintaining a close watch on the situation in south Lebanon after reports from the region that the Beirut troops were actually Syrians in Lebanese army uniforms. Israel, meanwhile, denied a Beirut report that its artillery had joined in the shelling of the Lebanese force.

(At the United Nations in New York, UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim asked the Security Council today to "meet in urgent consultation on the latest clashes in south Lebanon. According to a statement by a UN spokesman, Waldheim learned "with shock and sorrow" of the death of the two Nigerian soldiers and the wounding of 11 others and "has been in touch with all those who may be able to bring influence to bear on the situation." The statement added that Waldheim "explores this tragic development which is an affront not only to UNIFIL but also to the authority of the Security Council.")

12 MISSING MEZADA CREWMEN ARE PRESUMED TO BE DEAD

TEL AVIV, March 16 (JTA) -- The families of Israeli crewmen missing from the bulk carrier Mezada which sank in the North Atlantic near Bermuda on March 8 were advised by Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren to begin the traditional week of mourning as of yesterday. The families were notified that the men could be presumed dead after the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ended a five day sea-air search last Thursday without recovering additional bodies or survivors.

Of the 35 persons aboard the ship when she foundered, 11 were rescued, 12 were known to have drowned and 12 were missing. Goren instructed the families of men whose bodies were recovered and returned to Israel to begin the mourning period directly after the funerals. The Mezada carried a mixed crew of Israelis and other nationalities.

It was not immediately known how many, if any, of those lost were non-Israelis.

FOUR JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE LEGAL COUNSEL TO HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SUING THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL REVIEW

LOS ANGELES, March 16 (JTA) -- Four national Jewish organizations will provide legal counsel to a Holocaust survivor who is suing the Institute for Historical Review (IHR) for failure to honor its offer of a \$50,000 prize to the first person who could prove that Jews were murdered in the Nazi gas chambers during World War II.

The suit was filed by Mel Mermelstein, a 55-year-old Los Angeles businessman who has produced an affidavit that his parents and two sisters died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. He himself is a survivor of the extermination camp. Mermelstein is also seeking \$17 million in damages.

Irving Peters, chairman of the Southern California Committee for the World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, to be held in Jerusalem June 14-18, announced that the group has retained the counsels of the California branches of the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S. to assist Mermelstein who is a member of the executive committee of the World Gathering.

The IHR, based in Torrance, California, denies that six million Jews were murdered in Nazi death camps and contends that the Holocaust is a myth, a propaganda line taken by neo-Nazi and other anti-Semitic groups in the U.S. and abroad. According to the IHR, the gas chambers were delousing centers and the Jews who were burned in the crematoria died from malnutrition or disease.

The IHR is directed by Lewis Brandon who contends that the Holocaust myth was created by Zionists to shield Israel from criticism. Its treasurer is Elizabeth Carto, wife of Willis Carto who is treasurer of Liberty Lobby, an ultra-rightwing Washington-based organization.

POLISH ENVOY 'UNEQUIVOCALLY' CONDEMNS ALL ANTI-SEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS IN POLAND

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 16 (JTA) -- Ambassador Romuald Spasowski, Poland's envoy to the United States, said here that he "unequivocally condemned" all anti-Semitic manifestations in Poland and specifically the outdoor rally last Sunday in Warsaw at which speakers denounced Jews as a "Zionist clique" and charged that "Zionists" were attempting to seize power in Poland through the independent movement, Solidarity, which is seeking internal reforms.

Spasowski made his condemnation to a delegation from the World Jewish Congress in a 90-minute meeting last Friday at the Polish Embassy here. The WJC Congress had requested the meeting following the rally and an article in the Polish armed forces daily publication, "Soldiers of Liberty," that appeared to condone the anti-Semitic sentiments expressed at the rally.

Earlier last week, the WJC Congress along with other American Jewish organizations, including the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai B'rith International, denounced the anti-Semitic manifestations in Poland and called upon the government to condemn them.

Spasowski said that he personally and his government "unequivocally condemn all anti-Semitic manifestations in any form" within Poland, and the Polish government, "will not tolerate any anti-Semitic expression."

Communist Leader Disavows Anti-Semitism

Spasowski gave the WJC Congress delegation a copy of a speech which the First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party, Stanislaw Kania, delivered to the Polish Congress Commission following last Sunday's rally in Warsaw. An Embassy aide told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the text reached the Embassy only a half-hour before the delegation arrived.

"It has to be forcefully stressed," the Kania text said, "that we have no intention to and do not admit for a single moment the possibility of resorting for any purpose whatsoever to sources of anti-Semitism." Kania added that such sources are "alien to us and ... are incompatible with the Polish tradition and the tragic experience of our nation. Our party will never feed on such sources and I am sure that this is and will be beyond any doubt."

Concerned About Armed Forces Publication

The WJC Congress delegation said it expressed anxiety to Spasowski about the official Polish armed forces organ, "Soldiers of Solidarity," which, the delegation said, on March 10 "condoned the actions of the rightist elements in Poland who are trying to discredit Solidarity and accusing its leaders of 'Zionism'." The organ was also reported as saying that "the manipulators of the youth in 1968 want to realize the goals of Israel, not Poland." This was a reference to a charge that Jews in the Politburo during the Stalinist era were responsible for the "blood bath" of Polish patriots.

The delegation also said that despite the disavowal by Poland's Minister of Internal Affairs, Gen. Mieczyslaw Moczar, of his involvement in anti-Semitic manifestations during the 1968 official anti-Semitic period in Poland when he was Interior Minister, his rise to present prominence might encourage anti-Semitic elements. Moczar is presently a member of the Politburo and is expected to be the next President of Poland.

The WJC Congress delegation comprised Dr. Gerhart Riegner, WJC Congress secretary general; Kalman Sultanik, WJC Congress vice president and president of the Federation of Polish Jews; Jack Spitzer, B'nai B'rith International president and member of the WJC Congress Executive; Rabbi Arthur Schneier, WJC Congress-American Section chairman; Israel Singer, WJC Congress-North American Branch executive director; and Elan Steinberg, WJC Congress United Nations representative.

POLL SHOWS DAYAN WOULD HOLD BALANCE OF POWER IN FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT IF HE RUNS IN THE ELECTIONS WITH HIS OWN PARTY

TEL AVIV, March 15 (JTA) -- The latest public opinion poll showed that former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan would hold the balance of power in the formation of a new coalition government if he entered the election race at the

head of a party of his own. The results of the poll, published last Friday in the Jerusalem Post, indicated the political situation that would emerge if elections were to be held now instead of on June 30. It showed a slight drop in support for the Labor Alignment -- 43.5 percent, down from 48.6 percent in the January-February period -- and a slight gain for Likud which would win 20.6 percent of the vote, up from 16.9 percent in the last two months.

The poll indicated that a list headed by Dayan would hurt Labor more than Likud. A Dayan faction would win 19 Knesset seats with 15.4 percent of the vote, reducing Labor to 45 seats with a 37.6 percent share of the vote, the poll showed. It would still lead Likud which would win 20 seats with a 16.7 share of the vote.

TEACHERS EXPECTED TO BEGIN NEW SERIES OF JOB ACTIONS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- Israeli teachers were expected to begin a new wave of job actions today to protest a conditional decision by the Cabinet on their new wage contract. The "sanctions" would amount to a halving of teaching hours and would continue indefinitely, according to the teachers union. Some classes would end at 11 a.m. and others would begin at that hour instead of the normal 8 a.m. starting time.

The teachers were incensed because a majority of the Cabinet decided yesterday to endorse the new wage contract only if the national labor court rules that it does not run counter to the "framework agreement" which governs wage increases and is binding on all public sector employees.

The government feared that without a court ruling other employee groups would demand immediate wage hikes on a level with the 14 percent plus fringe benefits just won by the teachers.

Education Minister Zevulun Hammer opposed the condition and urged a no-strings endorsement of the contract worked out by the teachers union and government representatives last week. Hammer, a leader of the National Religious Party, told reporters that he would meet with Premier Menachem Begin today on the issue and would then "consider his future."

JACOB OLEISKI DEAD AT 80

TEL AVIV, March 16 (JTA) -- Jacob Oleiski, a veteran of more than 50 years with ORT, the Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training, died here Friday at the age of 80. He had been director general of ORT in Israel from 1950 until his retirement in 1966 during which he was in charge of its network of vocational schools in the country, many of which he founded.

Oleiski was born in Lithuania and was educated at the University of Kaunas in Lithuania and the University of Halle in Germany as a chemist and agronomist. His association with ORT began in 1925 in Kaunas where he served as principal of a vocational high school. He survived the Soviet and Nazi occupations of his native country during World War II, including a period in 1944 as an inmate of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Oleiski was appointed director of ORT activities in displaced persons camps in the American-occupied zone of Germany immediately after the war and immigrated to Israel in 1948. He became principal of the ORT school in Jerusalem the following year and was named director general of ORT in 1950.

SHAMIR WARNS THAT U.S. SALES OF WEAPONS TO SAUDI ARABIA COULD "CLOUD" U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 16 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared today that proposed U.S. sales of sophisticated weapons to Saudi Arabia could "cloud" relations between the U.S. and Israel. He warned that an arms sale escalation in the region could eventually cause "an explosion."

Speaking in the Knesset, Shamir noted, though, that the U.S. had recently pledged to boost Israel's own military strength, and its economic stability, and said detailed talks would soon begin between officials of the two countries on how those pledges were to be implemented.

In his statement to the Knesset on reported imminent U.S.-Saudi deals Shamir was referring to the proposed U.S. sale of offensive attachments for Saudi Arabia's F-15 warplanes, due to be delivered this year, and also to the reported U.S. consideration of the sale of advanced AWACS intelligence and control planes. The Israeli Foreign Minister warned that Israel would not be able to keep up with the regional arms race if systems of this cost and sophistication were supplied to its enemies.

Eban Warns Against Arms Deal

Top Labor Party "foreign" affairs spokesman Abba Eban charged that the government had "reconciled itself" to the proposed U.S.-Saudi arms deal (for offensive attachments to the F-15 warplane). Eban added that there was no real "understanding" between Washington and Jerusalem -- and it was for that reason that Premier Menachem Begin had not been invited to summit talks in Washington this spring.

Eban said the supply of AWACS to Saudi Arabia would mean a serious weakening of Israel's defensive capability. The Saudis "would be able to 'scan and peer into' Israel from the planes, he said. Many other Knesset members from both major parties faulted the government for not sounding more forceful in its public opposition to the U.S.-Saudi arms deals.

Leaked reports from yesterday's Cabinet meeting said Shamir had told his ministerial colleagues that Israel had no official U.S. confirmation of the reported AWACS deal. Israel's Embassy had been instructed to seek information, and had reported back to Jerusalem that no firm decision had been made in Washington.

U.S. CONDEMNS HADDAD'S FORCES FOR INFLECTING CASUALTIES ON UNIFIL BUT DENIES ISRAELI INVOLVEMENT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 16 (JTA) -- The State Department sharply condemned the tank and artillery shelling by Christian forces in south Lebanon that inflicted casualties on United Nations peacekeeping personnel there today but denied emphatically that there was any evidence of Israeli involvement in the incident.

Referring to the killing of two soldiers of the Nigerian contingent of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the wounding of 11 other Nigerians and two Lebanese army regulars in Kantara village, State Department spokesman William Dyess said the U.S. condemned those "outrageous actions."

"We wish to make it clear that the U.S. fully and unequivocally supports Lebanon's territorial integrity and UN Security Council Resolution 245 of March 19, 1978 under which UNIFIL received its mandate," Dyess said. "There must be no interference with UNIFIL and its attempts to carry out its duties." The State Department added that Haddad had pledged a truce but threatened to resume the shooting if Lebanese army units do not evacuate Kantara.

U.S. In Contact With Lebanon, Israel

Dyess said the U.S. was in contact with the Lebanese and Israeli governments with regard to "this grave development." Replying to a reporter's question as to why Israel was being consulted in this matter, Dyess said "The Israelis are very much concerned with the UN peacekeeping force and its success."

Under repeated questioning, he insisted that "we have no evidence Haddad is today using equipment subject to U.S. controls" and replied "no" when asked if he knew where Haddad was getting his tank shells. He said he had "no comment on what Haddad may have used in the past" with respect to weapons in his possession. "I'm addressing only this incident," he said.

When a reporter suggested that his remarks carried an "undertone of Israeli involvement," Dyess replied, "I don't mean to suggest any such undertone. Israel is known to support Haddad's Christian militia."

I.B. SINGER AWARDED 1981 BUBER-ROSENZWEIG PRIZE

BONN, March 16 (JTA) -- Isaac Bashevis Singer, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1978, the first Yiddish writer so honored, has been awarded the 1981 Buber-Rosenzweig Prize by the German Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation in Dortmund. The award, presented for the 16th time, honors persons who have promoted understanding between people of different races, religions, nationalities and political persuasions through their scientific, artistic or humanitarian endeavors.

The award ceremonies marked the opening of the Society's Brotherhood Week. Its theme this year is "Prayers and Rebels: The History and Culture of East European Jewry." Singer, 77, was born in Poland, came to the United States in 1935 and wrote fiction for the Jewish Daily Forward. Most of his novels and short stories deal with the experiences of East European Jews.

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- President Reagan will retain Samuel Lewis as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned Monday. Lewis was appointed to the post by President Carter on May 2, 1977. He succeeded Malcolm Toon who was transferred to Moscow.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- An Israeli officer and a soldier were killed Monday while dismantling mines and explosive charges in south Lebanon, an army spokesman reported. He said the Israelis were asked by Maj. Saad Haddad's Christian militia to help remove the explosives after a militiaman was wounded earlier in the day. They were reportedly planted by terrorists who infiltrated the Christian salient through territory held by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

TORONTO (JTA) -- The Federal Court of Canada has dismissed an appeal by John Ross Taylor, head of the racist organization, the Western Guard, against a one-year jail sentence and \$5000 fine. But opposing lawyers disagree over whether Taylor will go to jail.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE JEWS OF AUSTRALIA

By Joseph Palakoff

(Part Two Of A Six-Part Series)

MELBOURNE, March 16 (JTA) -- Australia's 70,000 Jews are disturbed and angered by the approaches of some politicians of the left towards the Arab-Israeli situation and by anti-Semitic slurs from both the far right and far left but in a general sense the community appears to be meeting the negative political circumstances with high morale and effective rebuttal.

The outlook, however, is for a hardening of international pressure in Australia against Israel and consequently "further intensification" of anti-Semitism. This is the opinion of the president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Isi Leibler, of Melbourne.

"While the Jewish condition in Australia has deteriorated to some extent as was inevitable in the context of what is happening internationally," the Belgian-born Leibler summarized, "the position here is still much better than in most Western countries."

In an interview in Melbourne and in his 155-page report for 1979-80 to the Council on his two years as its president, Leibler, who is 46, lauded Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's government and former Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock. Fraser, whose liberal (conservative) Party was re-elected last October, made a special trip to Washington last September to address the B'nai B'rith's International convention.

Position Of Australia's Government

The Fraser government, Leibler noted, was "willing to forego expediency and maintain a responsible and balanced policy in relation to the Middle East." Referring to the United Nations General Assembly actions and the international women's conference in Copenhagen last summer with its anti-Israel bias, Leibler observed: "It is a sad reflection on the state of the world that in all the votes Australia was in a minority of seven or in a minority of four."

While "problems" exist with some leaders of Australia's Labor Party with which a major part of Australia's Jewry had long been associated, Leibler emphasized that the party is not unfriendly to Israel. One problem was Labor Party leader Bill Hayden's visit to Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat which caused "considerable distress." But, Leibler noted, the visit was tempered by Hayden telling Arafat of his "unqualified support for the continued existence of Israel and his dissent from Arafat's extremist views."

Leibler noted that former Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, now a university professor, is critical both of the Fraser government and Australian Jews for defending Israel. According to Whitlam, the Jews are indulging in "crude political blackmail" while Fraser is "conforming to extremist Israeli policies."

In this context, Leibler stressed, Hayden has "unequivocally disassociated himself" from Whitlam's positions and "we have had no cause to question his (Hayden's) integrity or sincere commitment to the continued existence of the State of Israel which is embodied in the Labor Party's policy platform."

"Jews should not regard Whitlam's virulent anti-Israel outburst as being representative of Labor Party thinking," Leibler cautioned. "On

the other hand, we must not ignore the presence of a very vicious anti-Israel element within the Labor Party headed by Bill Hartley," Leibler estimated that of the 78 Labor Party members in the Australian Parliament "as many as nine are to all intents and purposes committed to the PLO policies and in some cases affiliated with organizations such as the Australia-Libyan Friendship Society."

"Fortunately," Leibler noted, "the situation is more than counter-balanced by the large number" of friends of Israel in the Labor Party, "the most prominent of whom would be Bob Hawke" who last Sept. 21 was awarded an honorary fellowship by Tel Aviv University.

At the Foreign Ministry in Canberra, which is considered "even-handed" towards Israel, a Middle East specialist who asked not to be identified told this reporter that Australia's "bible" with regard to the Arab-Israeli situation is the text of the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 which also continue essentially to be the basis of the United States policy.

Possible Shift Seen

But the Mideast specialist in Canberra warned that while the Fraser government opposes the PLO, "it may shift if the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist." Still, the specialist continued, the government does not go along with "loaded words like 'self-determination'" for inhabitants of territories Israel administers and it takes quite a different "public" position than the Carter Administration did on Jewish settlements in the territories.

"Australia has never stated publicly that the settlements are illegal," the specialist stressed. But he added, "Australia believes the settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace." This was the Carter Administration's position. President Reagan has said the settlements are not illegal. Australia, the specialist stated, avoids the U.S. position that Jerusalem is a "unified city" because "negotiations are necessary" regarding East-Jerusalem's future. As a "middle power," the specialist indicated, Australia doubtlessly will follow Washington's lead on the Middle East, albeit with some deviations.

(Tomorrow: Part Three)

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX UP 5.5%

JERUSALEM, March 16 (JTA) -- The consumer price index rose by 5.5 percent in February, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported yesterday. The figure was seized upon by supporters of Finance Minister Yoram Aridor's economic program as evidence of progress in the war on inflation and by critics to stress the opposite view.

Government officials noted that the February price rises were lower than those in preceding months and claimed that they represented a turning point in the anti-inflation campaign, especially as not all of Aridor's measures were in effect last month.

But Histadrut Secretary General Yehoram Meshel said the figures showed that Aridor's "wonder cures are not working." He noted that the February, 1981 price index was the highest for the month in the last two years. In February, 1980, the price index rise was just below five percent and in February, 1979 it was under 2.5 percent.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- The redeployment of Israel's armed forces from the Sinai to the Negev in compliance with the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty may force Tel Aviv University's astronomical observatory in the Negev to close down or relocate.